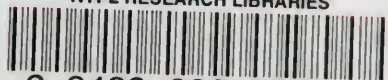


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# EDWARD CARPENTER

AN EXPOSITION AND AN APPRECIATION

BY

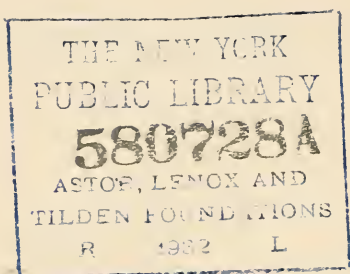
EDWARD LEWIS

“HE WAS LIKE A MAN STANDING ON A WATCH-TOWER, TO WHOM  
OTHERS TURNED AND SAID, NOT ‘WHAT OF THE NIGHT?’  
BUT ‘WHAT OF THE MORN AND OF THE COMING DAY?’”

WITH A PORTRAIT

NEW YORK  
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1915



709927



TO  
HIS FRIEND AND MINE  
J. L. W.



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*The Frontispiece is from a photograph by Elliott & Fry.*



# EDWARD CARPENTER

## CHAPTER I

### PERSONAL AND INTRODUCTORY

"I am an acme of things accomplish'd, and I am an encloser of things to be."—WALT WHITMAN.

#### ARGUMENT

*At the age of twenty-five, Edward Carpenter received the creative impulse, and abandoned his profession to place himself at its disposal. With the assistance of Walt Whitman's "Leaves of Grass" he was delivered of his spiritual child. It took external form in the poem "Towards Democracy," in which he celebrates his experience, and proclaims it as the promise of an arriving world-experience. The justification of this announcement lies in the fact that the Whole expresses itself in each of its parts in a particular way; and Carpenter, by revealing what had come to be in him, opens a door and discloses that which is coming to be for the race.*

**O**F Cornish descent on his father's side, and of Scottish on his mother's, Edward Carpenter was born at Brighton in the year 1844. He graduated at Cambridge, took

Holy Orders, and for several years occupied the position of curate to Frederic Denison Maurice.

These brief notes suffice to indicate his external history up to the age of twenty-five.

About this time he began to feel the pressure of a desire to

write some sort of a book which should address itself very personally and closely to any one who cared to read it—establish, so to speak, an intimate personal relation between myself and the reader.<sup>1</sup>

This desire, in some shape or form, is not uncommon with young men of eager and artistic temperament. It is the desire to create, to issue one's self as *logos spermatikos*, to bury one's self as a seed in the matrix of common human experience, to incarnate one's self, to beget children of one's own spirit. Often—perhaps most often—these creative pulses pass unrealized, partly because of the hardness of the heart, and partly because of the pitiless dominance of mechanism and organization in modern life. With Carpenter, however, the desire was so strong and so vital that, although, in spite of several attempts, it found no immediate outlet, it became in him, in the course of time, as a swelling, budding, multiplying mass of spiritual plasm making itself felt in consciousness as a vague, insistent, and increasing urgency.

He was faithful to the calling.<sup>2</sup> He loosened

<sup>1</sup> *Towards Democracy* (Pocket Edition, 1909), p. 511.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *T. D.*, p. 376.

his life somewhat, in order that, whatever this urgent Thing in him might be, it might have more chance for expression. He relinquished his Orders and became a University Extension Lecturer in provincial towns, lecturing chiefly on Music and Science. During this period of incubation, if it may be so called, Carpenter read and re-read *Leaves of Grass*. For ten years he saturated himself with the poems of Walt Whitman; they "filtered and fibred" into his very blood, as he says.

The relation of Carpenter to Whitman is a nice problem in higher criticism. Is he Whitman—massive, rugged, like a quarry—in miniature? Has he simply given form to some fragments of the gigantic formlessness of the "good, gray poet"? Is he Whitman set in a lower key? Did he simply reissue Whitman through the medium of his own consciousness, much, for example, as the Hebrews reissued the Babylonian myths through their race-consciousness, communicating its peculiar quality and texture to them? Can we accept Carpenter's own modest confession that he is the moon to Whitman's sun, the moon whose gentler radiance permits sight of the stars behind and beyond it, but shining by reflected light only?

Carpenter's acknowledgment of indebtedness is unequivocal.

"I find it difficult to imagine what my life would have been without it," he writes.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 518.

Yet he firmly claims his own independence and originality :

Whatever resemblance there may be between the rhythm, style, thoughts, constructions, etc., of the two books (*Leaves of Grass* and *Towards Democracy*), must, I think, be set down to a deeper similarity of emotional atmosphere and intension in the two authors—even though that similarity may have sprung and no doubt did largely spring out of the personal influence of one upon the other. Anyhow, our temperaments, stand-points, antecedents, etc., are so entirely diverse and opposite that, except for a few points, I can hardly imagine that there is much real resemblance to be traced.<sup>1</sup>

The real question is, precisely in what does Carpenter's indebtedness to Whitman consist? And while here and there it may be possible to detect direct literary influence and inspiration,—for example, that extraordinary poem "A Military Band,"<sup>2</sup> with its characteristic suggestion of the constant circumstance of the Invisible and the Intangible, the suffusion of the particular by the Universal, of a moment by Eternity, and Personality as creative and interpretative of all things, appears to be as a blossom whose seed may be found in a line of Whitman's poem "A Song of Occupations," which runs,

All music is what awakes from you when you are reminded by the instruments,—

yet perhaps the actual relation of the two men

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 518.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 195.



may best be expressed in the figure of speech that Whitman played the part of midwife in the deliverance of Carpenter's spiritual child.

The differences between the two men are obvious, and are deeper than can be accounted for by personal idiosyncrasy or environmental influence ; it meant not a little that Whitman's psychological roots were in America, while Carpenter's were in Cornwall and Scotland, or that while Whitman served with the army through a bloody and bitter war, Carpenter served as a parish curate ; and the latter is justified in claiming a fundamental independence ; he is an original source, a well-spring ; he has central spontaneity. In his own rank and right Carpenter is a Master.

The tension of the " mood "—it is Carpenter's own word—increased. It demanded even greater freedom in external life than peripatetic lecturing afforded. This, too, had to be given up, although it was all that he had, " even all his living." He had already for some time, under the necessity for an outdoor life and manual labour, been living with a friend who was a farmer in Derbyshire, and occupying the intervals between his courses of lectures with farm-work. Now, with his own hands, he knocked together a small wooden shanty in the home-field—little more than a sentinel box—and therein

or in the fields and the woods, all that spring and summer (1881) and on through the winter, by day and sometimes

## 6 THE CRITICAL EXPERIENCE

by night, in sunlight or in rain, by frost and snow and all sorts of grey and dull weather, I wrote *Towards Democracy*—or at any rate the first and longer poem that goes by that name.<sup>1</sup>

Precisely what was this mood? It is necessary to inquire somewhat closely into this, because it is the critical experience apart from which *Towards Democracy* would not have come into existence, and apart from which it cannot, either as a whole or in its parts, be understood. Just as the whole teaching of St. Paul is centred round, and derives from, the experience which befell him on the road to Damascus, so the whole of Carpenter's teaching is little more than an intellectual and literary expression of what befell him at Bradway. He himself when pressed described it as

the disclosure within of a region transcending in some sense the ordinary bounds of personality, in the light of which region my own idiosyncrasies of character—defects, accomplishments, limitations, or what not—appeared of no importance whatever, an absolute freedom from mortality, accompanied by an indescribable calm and joy.<sup>2</sup>

In a phrase, reminiscent of Carlyle, he speaks of it as a Splendour of which, like Sheba's glory, the half could not be told. It was an illumination, coming upon him at times with coruscating flashes of imaginative insight. It was a "central

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 513.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 512.

glow " experienced chiefly as feeling, a kind of cosmic emotionalism, but continually scintillating up into the intellectual consciousness in sparks of thought some of which it was possible for him to capture and retain in speech-forms. It was the up-rush of a fountain of living waters, normally latent in man, which here and there, because of some special local condition, is able to breach the barrier of separated individuality. . . .

Let us imagine that individuals are like enclosed pools or small seas, lying close to the Ocean, but separated therefrom by natural barriers, some of which are thicker and stouter than others, some of which may indeed be strengthened by artificial means. The barrier looking oceanwards represents the form of our individuality as opposed to the Universal. It is at the barrier that our consciousness of separateness within and from the great Whole of life, our consciousness of the not-me, arises. This is the usual condition. The enclosed waters, which are, indeed, of the same "stuff" as the Ocean, know nothing thereof, save the sound of its endless motion, perchance some tremor from its constant tidal beating, and maybe now and again in stress of spiritual weather a dash of its mighty spray. But here (let us say) is a barrier which is slighter than others, looser in structure, more penetrable, worn thin somehow; and through this, one day—"Ye know not the day nor the hour when the Son of Man cometh"—the Ocean pours triumphantly in,

## 8 INDIVIDUAL AND UNIVERSAL

unites it with itself and probably with adjacent pools also, giving the sense of largeness, freedom, profound joy and peace, but with tremendous disturbance. The barrier of individuality is broken through; what remains of it is submerged and is felt as being submerged; the consciousness of separateness yields to that of intimate union.

This figure will suffice, on the understanding that the puncturing of the barrier is from within. The Ocean lies deeper within, rather than far-stretching without, the individual. Normally, the individual is capsuled from the Ocean, but the film may be burst by the rising of the underneath waters, just as a commotion deep within the earth-crust may drive the molten ore up into the heart of the mountain.

The prince of love . . . touched the walls of my hut with his finger from within, and passing through like a fire delivered me with great unspeakable deliverance from all evil.<sup>1</sup>

It is probable that some such experience as this lies behind all the phenomena of genius and inspiration.<sup>2</sup> It is the urge to all creative work. It is the second birth which makes the poet, the artist, the musician, the prophet, the saint. In the case of some, the emotion is milder, the

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 190.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. F. W. H. Myers: "Genius is . . . a power of appropriating the results of subliminal mentation, to subserve the supraliminal stream of thought."



touch gentler, the suffusion quieter—as Browning says in “Abt Vogler” :

God has a few of us whom He whispers in the ear.

With others, it is as a sudden challenge, like the Light which broke upon Saul of Tarsus, the effect of which is a profound and permanent psychological change, a true conversion ; the life receives a dramatic deflection and proceeds henceforth in a new direction, or finds a new centre of gravity under the influence of which familiar facts suffer rearrangement and a new interpretation. There is a new world, a new heaven, and a new earth, because there is a changed centre, a new heart.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps it is true of most of those to whom such experience comes that they simply continue a personal career under its influence and inspiration, and are content to express their vision and their ecstatic feeling in what forms of speech, poetry, music, painting, they can find. They work in its light ; they act under its power. Carpenter distinguishes himself among them by concentrating on the experience itself ; he is less concerned to describe it or give it artistic expression than he is to emphasize it as a universal possibility and promise, interpreting it in terms less of personal redemption than of world-hope, asserting that his own experience is the harbinger

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Masfield's poem “The Everlasting Mercy.”

## 10 INTERPRETATION OF EXPERIENCE

of an arriving kingdom destined to bestow upon Humanity as a whole the priceless gifts of which it gave him the private possession. He does not merely write poetry under the influence of this illumination, he preaches the experience itself as a world-gospel ; his profound personal inspiration becomes the central pivotal argument of his prophecy.

It is worth while to pause here and consider the justification of this, though the matter will be more fully dealt with in the following chapter. The question is this : By what right does a man say, " My personal experience is the promise of a world-experience ; what I am, Humanity shall be " ?

It is not necessary to argue here the hypothesis of the Unity of Nature which is the fundamental scientific truth—the hypothesis which best explains the facts—of the modern world ; nor the inevitable corollary that Humanity is an organism, a body with many members. It is important, however, to emphasize the fact, not commonly perceived, that of any organic whole it is true that, while the Parts are within the Whole, the Whole is also within each and all of the Parts. The notes in a musical phrase are not as beads upon a string, or as dewdrops on a gossamer ; the phrase is a unitary whole ; it arose first in the mind of the composer as a thought-movement or a pulse of feeling ; it was not built up note by note ; the phrase, as written, grew not by archi-

texture but by exfoliation ; the phrase is not the arithmetical sum of the notes ; each note is a facet, rather than a fragment, of the whole phrase, and takes its quality and colour not simply in relation to the other notes, but in relation to the phrase as a whole. The phrase is continuous through all the notes ; check it at any point, and there will be in the mind the sense of pressure, as of something coming on, some gathered momentum not only of sound but of significance. Alter a single note, or even the length of a rest, and you will “ spoil it all ” ; and the “ spoiling ” will not be as if a square bead intruded upon a string of round beads, or as if a discordant colour were placed in a graduated series of colours, but as if a meaning had been completely changed or altogether lost. The whole phrase is one movement, and the notes are not so much parts of it as they are moments in it. Until the last note has died away the full significance of the phrase is not apparent, yet the whole phrase as a whole was in the first and in each successive note.

If one asks why it is that from a fertilized cell a body of one particular shape and structure rather than another arises, the only satisfactory answer is that the whole body is there from the beginning and itself determines the character of each fission and of each arrangement of cells. A body is not formed after the manner of some fluid material which is poured into a mould, or of some plastic substance which receives shape

## 12 THE PART AND THE WHOLE

in the hands of an artist ; a spiritual entity, of great potential energy and according to its own inherent character and qualities, creates its own body by a process of self-incarnation ; nor does it incarnate itself piecemeal, finally binding up the parts by joints and ligaments into an organism, but it expresses its whole Self in each part in a particular way, and requires all such parts for a complete self-expression on that particular plane of manifestation. That which Tennyson declared hypothetically as he gazed upon the "flower in the crannied wall," Carpenter states categorically, and with all the fervour of that experience which made him a prophet :

You are that Whole which Nature also is—and yet you are that Whole in your own peculiar way.

Were your eyes destroyed, still the faculty of sight were not destroyed ;

Out of the same roots again as before would the optic apparatus spring.

Should you die of starvation you would only begin immediately after death to take food in another way ; and the impulse of union which is at the base of sex lies so deep down that the first reawakening of consciousness would restore it.

Believe yourself a Whole, indivisible, indefeasible,

Reawakening ever under these, under those, conditions,

Expanding thus far, expanding less far, expanding farther ;

Expanding this side, expanding that side, expanding all sides ;

Ever diverse yet the same, the same yet diverse—inexhaustibly continuous with the rest ;



And made for love—to embrace all, to be united ultimately with all.<sup>1</sup>

These analogies, from the musical phrase and from the body, taken in general terms, affirm the fact that the Whole is present in each of the Parts, that a Part is not a fragment but a particularized expression of the Whole. Since, therefore, Humanity is an organic Whole—past, present, and future—it is expressed as such in each individual in a particular way. The race sings its songs through the lips of the poet, beholds its visions through the eyes of the seer, and achieves heights of holiness and deliverance and communion through the ecstatic consciousness of the saint ; and the profound experiences of the individual are at one and the same time his own, and the experiences of the race as a whole in him.

In considerations such as these lies Carpenter's justification for expounding his own experience as a world-evangel. His sense, also, of his relation in that experience to the Whole of Things determines the form in which his message is delivered. There is a sentence in which he describes the main function which he would perform for those who are willing to listen to him. He says :

Lo ! I open a door.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 490.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154.

Robert Browning has declared in “ Paracelsus ” :

To know  
Rather consists in opening out a way  
Whence the imprisoned splendour may escape,  
Than in effecting entry for a light  
Supposed to be without.

Edward Carpenter desires to come to the place where a man stands and to open a door for him. It is a great service ; it is a greater service than to “ go out into the highways and byways and compel them to come in,” or to “ pluck them as brands from the burning ” ; it is perhaps the greatest service that one man may render to his kind. To open a door, to make outlet at least possible, to widen the horizon, to reveal the vista, to breach the barrier, to unveil the bigger life—this is human service of the highest order.<sup>1</sup> You may be a prisoner, confined within a narrow and stuffy circumstance ; if you are ready and willing to move out, the open door is your chance of liberty ; if you are in a dull sort of way content with what and where you are, drugged by use and habit into the acceptance of a situation incompatible with highest manhood, the open door is a great allurements, quickening in your heart the spirit of venture. Carpenter does not try to frighten you out through the door, in the

<sup>1</sup> “ I am the Way.” Cf. also the Persian Bâb (the Gate).

fashion of a so-called evangelistic preacher ; nor would he drag you through it, in the fashion of a dogmatic philosopher ; he opens the door, and lets you see through. Itself is the great persuasion, unless you are asleep or sick ; and if asleep or sick, yet it gives entrance to currents of fresh air which, short of any energetic response on your part, will tend to expand atrophied parts, awaken slumbering functions, and germinate the seeds of a new health.

The volume entitled *Towards Democracy* was, as we have seen, the immediate product of the experience through which Carpenter passed in the year 1881. The writing of it began in that year and continued till 1912—a period of twenty-one years—during which successively enlarged editions were published. The volume bears all the marks of inspiration and spontaneity. It remains his chief work. In 1883 he took a small property in the village of Millthorpe, lying equidistant from Sheffield and Chesterfield, and earned his living by market-gardening, publishing other volumes at intervals. The more important of these we shall examine in due course, but they are of secondary importance compared with *Towards Democracy* ; they are, for the most part, elucidations or more detailed expansions of some of the seed-thoughts of which his first book is a veritable storehouse. They are by no means unimportant, but are reflective rather than declaratory, argumentative, scientific, constructive, rather than

spontaneous. They attempt a reasoned and systematic statement of some of the intuitive apprehensions of truth which are found in *Towards Democracy*; they relate the vision to the thought-content of the modern mind.

## CHAPTER II

### THE NATURE OF THE SELF

"It is by love only that we can fully enter into that harmony with others which alone constitutes our own reality and the reality of the universe. We conceive the universe as a spiritual whole, made up of individuals, who have no existence except as manifestations of the whole; as the whole, on the other hand, has no existence except as manifested in them."—McTAGGART. —

#### ARGUMENT

*The witness of introspection is that that which begins as Feeling tends to pass outwards through Thought to Action. Desire precedes structure, and the complex organization of our present human bodies represents mental and conative processes in the age-long race-life. The creative race-Ego is in each individual, working on through him. The fundamental fact of individual selfhood is a Universal Self. The same conclusion is reached from an examination of the development of consciousness; in animals knower, thing known, and knowledge are undifferentiated, but in man there arises self-consciousness with its oppositions and delusions. This differentiation into separated selves ministers to the growth and realization of individuality, and looks towards the re-fusion of individuals into a higher unity. Of this higher*



*unity, as being present amid the differences and antagonisms of self-consciousness, the experience of "cosmic consciousness" is a witness. In this experience, the individual self recognizes the Great Self as its own truth and reality.<sup>1</sup> At the surface, the individual appears an isolated fragment; but inwardly and more truly he is an all-embracing kingdom. The true self is a Democracy.*

**T**HE *Art of Creation* is Edward Carpenter's most ambitious prose work, and a real contribution to the solution of the central problem of finite existence. The book takes its title from a lecture which is printed as the first chapter, and its main theme is a fresh, profound, and very suggestive analytical examination of the nature of the Self. The reader will not fail to be impressed with the remarkable anticipations which the book contains of views which are associated with the name of Henri Bergson.

Reflecting independently upon the problem of life, Carpenter bases his metaphysics, in strict accordance with the Bergsonian injunction, upon an act of the sympathetic imagination whereby the thinker, no longer content with observing the external forms in which the life-process manifests, places himself as it were within the life-stream which is the core of all objects.

<sup>1</sup> "If a man worship the Self only as his own true state, his work cannot perish; for whatever he desires, that he obtains from the Self" (*Bṛihad-aranyaka-Up.* I. iv. 15).

Carpenter did not hit upon Bergson's beautiful and illuminating symbol of the fountain whose central, perpetually-urgent jet represents the *élan vital* of the creative life, the vital force, the super-consciousness—or whatever it may be called—which is the “life of all that hath been made”; and from which intellect and matter each arise in their turn by a kind of lateral or peripheral relaxation, retardation, curving-backwards, in the fashion of the fountain-spray, fine as mist (intellect) above, and becoming heavier drops (matter) as the fall proceeds; probably this view of the creation of matter is original in human thought with the brilliant French philosopher<sup>1</sup>; yet, short of this last link connecting the non-material with the material, Carpenter's theory is very similar. We shall now give an outline of it.

It is inevitable that the first experiments in this more intimate way of knowing, this knowledge from within, should be directed towards the thinker's own personality; for although the process of introspection, especially as it becomes more and more profound penetrating to the very roots of being, is not easy, the Self is nearer and more penetrable than any other object of knowledge. Scrutinizing so, and taking

<sup>1</sup> The fundamental identity of spirit and matter has, of course, often been affirmed: cf. Lao-tzu, “The two things, the spiritual and the material, though we call them by different names, in their Origin are one and the same.”

## 20 CREATION AS SELF-UTTERANCE

the hint of dreams, Carpenter affirms that the ultimate investigation reveals

a continual ebullition and birth going on within us, and an evolution out of the Mind-stuff of forms which are the expression and images of underlying feeling; these forms, at first vague and undetermined in outline, rapidly gather definition and clearness and materiality, and press forward towards expression in the outer world.<sup>1</sup>

This suggests the norm of the creative process.

We seem to come upon something which we may call a Law of Nature—namely, that within ourselves there is a continual movement outwards from Feeling towards Thought and then to Action; from the inner to the outer; from the vague to the definite; from the emotional to the practical; from the world of dreams to the world of actual things and what we call reality.<sup>2</sup>

Creation, therefore—individual and cosmic (though in the end the two are one and the same)—is in the nature of a real self-utterance,<sup>3</sup> a self-revelment; the process is taking place everywhere and at all times; the moment of Creation is an eternal Now, its locus an omnipresent Here; we are part of it, and partakers in it; it is possible for us to “learn and to practise the art in ourselves.”<sup>4</sup>

Consider, for purposes of illustration, the living body. How does it arise? Even the protozoon must be regarded as in some rudimentary sense

<sup>1</sup> *The Art of Creation* (Edition 1907), p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> *A. C.*, p. 14.      <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.      <sup>4</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 220.



desiring food, and the recurrent desire, exciting to action, gives rise ultimately to the structure necessary for the pursuit and capture of food. Similarly,

fear oft repeated calls forth the long ears of the rabbit or the donkey, or gives to the monkey its structure for climbing trees.<sup>1</sup>

The human hand, a material structure, is the crystallization of habitual, persistent desire—a mental process. Just as the complicated mechanism of a modern railway engine did not come suddenly into being, but was thought out in detail, and by numerous minds in successive generations, from very lowly, crude, imperfect beginnings, each addition or new adjustment or arrangement of parts being the expression of a thought and the satisfaction of a need, so the human body has been literally thought out, and is the result of “the selection and chiselling of thousands of minds through the centuries.” With this creative process we are continuous; our bodies in all their details of structure and function are mental legacies, the materialization of a mental inheritance; and the same life-principle which has through the ages created the body is here within each of us, and still at work.

The whole life of the Race from which we have come, the whole route, the whole series of thought-processes by which we have descended, is within us, in our bodies, in our subconscious selves.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *A. C.*, p. 209.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 211.

## 22 CONSCIOUSNESS—FIRST STAGE

Our bodies are "the race-mind made visible," and within each of us, as the root-fact of our personality, is the race-Ego, the æonial creator of the body, and the potentiality of all future creations.

The primal being, in which all thoughts of necessity inhere, which underlies all thoughts, and contains myriads yet unexpressed, is in us. It is there, and accessible to our consciousness. When we reach to it we reach the source of all Power.<sup>1</sup>

This examination of the conception and process of Creation leads us to the conclusion that there is somewhere in the secrets of our personalities an "Immortal Self" with which we may identify ourselves, and so become conscious partakers in the eternal ever-proceeding creative act.

Upon this same fact we converge when we interrogate consciousness itself. For we find that there are "three stages or degrees of consciousness."

The first is that in which the knower, the knowledge, and the thing known are still undifferentiated. This is the characteristic consciousness of animals; it embraces the gamut between sentience and instinct. Carpenter would explain the phenomena of instinct in animals in terms of this non-differentiation.

Their knowledge is, as it were, embedded in the great living intelligent whole (of the world), and therefore

<sup>1</sup> *A. C.*, p. 212.

each special act of knowledge or perception carries with it a kind of aura or diffused consciousness extending far, far around it.<sup>1</sup>

The world as constructed by instinct must be vastly different from the world as constructed by intellect ; and the root of the difference lies in the fact that while in the case of the former the focus or nucleus of the perceived system is comparatively dim and undefined but is associated with a very extensive fringe, in the case of the latter the presented object is much more clear-cut and the fringe correspondingly restricted ; an animal feels its way in the world, we reason it out ; in other words, it “ sees ” as a whole that which we construct out of definitely related parts.

Then the process of differentiation begins ; it begins very early in the life of a human infant ; and the second stage of consciousness arises in which (with greater or less clearness) knower, knowledge, and thing known are distinguished and partially opposed or held together by a perceived relation. This is the stage of self-consciousness, of the opposition of subject and object, of the growth of the brain, of the development of thought ; in a word, the normal human condition at the present time.

As the differentiation deepens and advances, there sets in the dominance of the consciousness of separateness—of the individual from the Whole,

<sup>1</sup> *A. C.*, p. 55

## 24 CONSCIOUSNESS—SECOND STAGE

and from other individuals; the illusion of discrete and isolated individuality arises; the devil (*Diabolos*, the divider who flings mists between) enters the Garden of Eden; grief and pain ensue; and the whole labyrinth of human problems, religious, political, social, comes into being.

In a characteristic passage, Carpenter describes the tendency of this period:

The subject and object of knowledge drift farther and farther apart. The self is left face to face with a dead and senseless world. Its own importance seems to increase out of all reason; and with the growth of this illusion (for it is an illusion) the knowledge itself becomes dislocated from its proper bearings, becomes cracked and impotent, and loses its former unity with Nature. Objects are soon looked upon as important only in so far as they minister to the (illusive) self; and there sets in the stage of Civilization, when self-consciousness becomes almost a disease; when the desire of acquiring and grasping objects, or of enslaving men and animals, in order to minister to the self, becomes one of the main motives of life; and when, owing to this deep fundamental division in human nature and consciousness, men's minds are tormented with the sense of sin, and their bodies with a myriad forms of disease.<sup>1</sup>

The application of the epithet "illusive" to this second stage of consciousness must be regarded as descriptive only, and not as a criticism; for the second is necessary to the arrival of the third stage, and the experiences of this inter-

<sup>1</sup> *A. C.*, p. 58.



mediate period minister to the development and deliverance of the deeper areas of personality.

Just as a mass of water, falling from a height, becomes separated up, before it reaches the ground, into a multitude of isolated drops, so the Infinite Self descending into finite conditions is differentiated into a multitude of individualized fragments. Instead of an original solidarity there is apparent isolation ; instead of close and intimate cohesion there is apparent opposition ; the sense of the Whole is lost in the sense of separation. Round each of the multitude of raindrops there is a well-defined circumference within which the drop is self-contained, and by reason of which it distinguishes itself and is separated from every other ; within the original water-mass, however, those well-defined boundaries did not exist, though all the drops were there. If we could attribute consciousness to the raindrops, we should say that they were conscious of separateness from each other, and that this consciousness, non-existent in the original water-mass, arose for each drop on the circumference-surface as it gradually differentiated itself from the others in the descent. In the original mass the consciousness of union was dominant ; in the rain-shower, on the contrary, the consciousness of separateness would be dominant.

Individuals are something like that. We are the fragmentary expressions on this finite plane

of being of a Unitary Life, a Cosmic Self. Deep in our hearts there may be some slumbering echo of the far-off home which we have left as we came "trailing clouds of glory" into this mortal sphere; there may be some fading glimmers of the "vision splendid," some latent pulse of that original life from which we can never really be cut off, any more than the raindrops can be forever cut off from the cloud-land, but must return thither after fetching their wide compass through stream and river and ocean; but for the most part our dominant consciousness is one of separateness both from one another and from our primal source. It is the fount and origin of all world-delusion and world-wrong and world-woe. It is the Devil, the sunderer, the flinger of mists between man and man, and between man and God, the cause of all our misconception and misunderstanding, error, false relationship, waywardness, and the whole brood of human wrongs.

But this consciousness of separateness is not evil in itself; it is a necessary moment in the perfect development of that which may, in contrast, be called the love-consciousness. If we return to our raindrops again, and consider them as endowed with a consciousness of separated individuality, it is clear that in the jostle and tumble of the rain-shower wherein they were opposed to each other, and sometimes came into collision and were broken upon each other, they would interiorly discover and develop some-

thing the possession of which would make the consciousness of unity, when they shall be received again into the cloud, of a different quality than could have been possible prior to their separation from each other.

If mankind ever gets back <sup>1</sup> again to the Eden-garden—as surely it must—into a state of simple, unsullied, pure, pervasive consciousness of oneness with God (the All-life) and with each other in joy, it is clear that that consciousness of union will be of a different quality than could have been realized by those who first “walked and talked with God in the garden”; and that added something, whatever it may be, that growth and development of deeper personal powers and properties, will have been mediated through experience in a world wherein the consciousness of difference and opposition submerged for a time that of union and communion.

The period of illusion, then, is a necessary stage in the development of the perfect knowledge and the attainment of the perfect existence. It is like the “knowledge of good and evil” which makes possible the rise of man from a primitive innocence into holiness.

When, however, the depths of this illusion of separateness have been sounded, and the lessons of strife and pain have been duly learned, the process of differentiation reaches to its term

<sup>1</sup> This “getting back,” however, is not mere return: the figure to be kept in the mind is that of a spiral.

## 28 CONSCIOUSNESS—THIRD STAGE

and one of redintegration sets in ; with this comes the third stage of consciousness, which has been called the Cosmic Consciousness. The name is bad enough, but the experience, even though it is fitful and fragmentary, is indubitably real.

There is a consciousness in which the subject and the object are felt, are known, to be united and one—in which the Self is felt to be the object perceived (“*I am the hounded slave*”), or at least in which the subject and object are felt to be parts of the same Being, of the same including Self of all.<sup>1</sup>

Carpenter illustrates the difference between these two orders of consciousness by the figure of a tree,

in which two leaves observe each other externally for a long enough time, mutually exclusive, and without any suspicion that they have a life in common. Then the “self-consciousness” of one of the leaves, deepening inwardly (down the twig or branch), at last reaches the point whence the “self” of the other leaf branches off—and becomes aware of its unity with the other. Instantly its external observation of its fellow-leaf is transformed ; it sees a thousand meanings in it which it never saw before. Its fellow-leaf is almost as much an expression of self as itself is ; for both now belong to a larger self—that of the spray or branch from which they depend.<sup>2</sup>

The evidence for this experience, which is here called the third stage of consciousness, is ample enough. Classical examples have been collected

<sup>1</sup> *A. C.*, p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.



in such a book as Dr. Bucke's *Cosmic Consciousness*. Carpenter himself, as we have seen, was the subject of it. Perhaps it is not so rare as is usually imagined, but the ordinary man coming under the influence of its passing touch fails to realize what it is, and gives it another name. In form and method it is similar to the first stage, but infinitely richer in content because of the second stage on which it supervenes. It is the perfect knowledge, and the only true existence.

All things, and the whole universe of space and time, really exist and are in this third state. . . . This is the state of absolute Being in which all things are, and from which the things which we ordinarily see and know proceed by disintegration or ignorance. It is the state from which they lapse or fall by disintegration into ordinary consciousness or thought.<sup>1</sup>

Carpenter's indebtedness to Plato and his affinities with Bergson are obvious here. Indeed, important portions of the latter's *Creative Evolution* might almost be elaborations of the following eloquent and profound words in which Carpenter discusses the Pathway to Reality and finds that the intellect cannot bring us to the goal.

All the universe exists, and is in this third state of consciousness; but we in the strange condition of illusion which belongs to the second stage—exiles from the Eden-garden, persuaded of the separateness of our individual selves, and unable to enter into true know-

<sup>1</sup> A. C., p. 68. Cf. the last sentence with Bergson's simile of the Fountain.

ledge—are content to gnaw off tiny particles, which we call thoughts, from the great Reality. Assimilating and digesting these as best we can, we are persuaded that some day, putting all the results together, we shall arrive at the Reality. But the quest by this method is obviously hopeless. Infinities of infinity stretch before us, and vistas of brain-gnawing misery. Arrive doubtless we shall, but it will be by another route.<sup>1</sup>

Intellectual knowledge advances as it were in ever-widening circles in a superficies, and reaches towards a goal at the imagined end of a horizontal line ; the true knowledge will come rather by an inward descent along a vertical line, not giving new facts so much as a new point of view, and, therefore, a new perspective and significance to facts already known.

But we cannot stop here. We must inquire as to what is implied in this experience, this third degree of consciousness.

Briefly, it is that the “final and real Self is one and universal.”

There is a real universal Self—a one absolute Ego and knower, underlying all existences, the essence and life of the whole universe, and true self of every creature.<sup>2</sup>

For if A, attaining to the true and perfect knowledge, realizes his essential identity with all objects ; if B, also the same ; then A and B must be essentially identical with each other. In that state of existence and knowledge each looks

<sup>1</sup> *A. C.*, p. 69.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79.

out upon and embraces the Whole from a particular point or centre. The areas, so to speak, are identical, but the focus-point is different. Each is the Whole, but in a peculiar aspect. The ultimate fact of a man's personality is a universal Being. Each and every personal "me" is an individualized aspect of a super-personal Ego ; and each develops differently according to its own law and order of exfoliation <sup>1</sup> under the influence of experience, which serves to elicit the inner latent powers and qualities.

This development takes time, but there is plenty of time. The ultimate fact lies buried deep down and far removed from the consciousness of the normal man, but it is there for all that. The thing waits. It may tarry, but it will not delay ; that is to say, it is coming on all the time, but there are hindrances.

To take an example. God—if we may give our traditional religious name to the Universal Self—in reality is our Home, our great Companion, our enfolding Lover, the deepest Self within the self, the larger Self which embraces all our narrower selves ; He is the all-flooding Light within which we are rays ; He is the creative Fire, within which we are as flames and sparks ; language is all too feeble to describe the closeness and intimacy with which He enfolds and enthuses us ; penetrative as light, pervasive as air ; in subtler contact with us than is the ether to the inflow and through-

<sup>1</sup> *Vide pp. 129 and ff. in Civilization : its Cause and Cure.*

flow of which the solidest material offers no bar or hindrance ; more intimate in His embrace of our spirits than that wherewith the ocean gathers the drops of water within it, or the earth-crust enfolds indistinguishably the mountain-roots ; Life of our life, Breath of our breath, Soul of our soul ; all-shadowing, all-indwelling ; the “fulness that filleth all things.”

Something at which these words but feebly hint is what God is to us in reality, but the consciousness of separateness has placed Him far away, fashioned Him as a mighty Individual in opposition to us, to be feared, to be hidden from in the bushes of the garden, to be wrestled with in prayer and turned if may be. Much Christian theology is based upon this superficial illusive consciousness ; it is “of the devil” ; it creates a gulf between us and God which never existed and does not exist ; and in the train of this fundamental illusion comes the whole crop of errors, false doctrines, competitive theologies, which have caused untold trouble and despair in the hearts of men.

Through this stage we are destined to pass, and the deliverance will come with a new experience rather than with a new theology. Not a few have received the harbingers of this liberation ; sometimes there are “flashes struck from midnights” and “stars which noondays kindle,” there are rare “moments when the spirit’s true endowments stand out plainly from its false



ones"; intuitive experiences of amazing range in which, for example, Wordsworth apprehended the spiritual continuum which makes the varied procession and panorama of the visible universe a Unity, and in which—the gaze being more definitely inward than outward—Walt Whitman found solid ground for the tremendous assertion,

I am an acme of things accomplished, and I am an encloser of things to be;

and Jesus for the vibrant, world-illuminating exclamation,

Before Abraham was, I am.

Of the promise of this experience Carpenter is among the prophets. It is his gospel, many-faceted, which through these pages we shall hold up to the light.

Be still, O Soul, and know that thou art God.<sup>1</sup>

Normally, however, we are not conscious of these profound and universal roots of being; we do not know who we are. The reason for this has now been made clear; it is because we habitually live our lives on the surface-planes which divide us from each other. In each personality there is core and there is crust, and our usual consciousness is that of the crust. We are intensely self-conscious; but the self of which we are aware is the separated "me," the empirical

*I. L.*, p. 461.

ego, which is simply an "associative bond"<sup>1</sup> unifying our manifold mental and emotional experiences in the phenomenal world. We tend to regard this "me" as fixed and final; also to confuse it with the objective world in which it is reflected. Our first knowledge of ourselves is "in a mirror, darkly," and we take the image for the reality. Wandering and labouring amid the illusions of self-consciousness, we have not yet learned our true identity; yet experience is the right pathway; we need more of it and deeper; we need a new orientation towards it; we are like a child

regarding its own reflection—say in the tiniest of tiny pools. So small is the little mirror that it only reflects the smallest portion of the child—a lock of hair, a portion of its dress. The child does not in the least recognize what the reflection is. But it has a water-can and pours water into the pool, and the pool grows. Now the child can see its own entire hand in the water. It is fascinated, and tires not to pose its fingers in every way for reflection. But again the pool goes on growing, and more of its body becomes visible, till at last, lo! the child can see itself complete.

So to us. Each new thought, each new experience that is added to the Me, is like a drop of water that is added to the pool, till it becomes large enough—the Me becomes sufficiently universal—to reflect the universality of the I.<sup>2</sup>

The addition of another thought will lead us from this chapter to the next. It is not enough

<sup>1</sup> *A. C.*, p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

to see that in each personality there is core and crust, and that while the "crust" is unstable and impermanent the "core" is one with the Universal—

Man that art God yet perishest as grass<sup>1</sup>;

we must see also the implication of the central truth. If the inmost self partakes of the nature of the Universal, it must embrace all within it. The true individual is not a pin-point of conscious personality opposed to a myriad other similar points; the true individual is the Whole, and this is potential in each of us. The inner self is a social self. As consciousness deepens, we leave behind us the sense of individuality set *contra mundum*, we come to the sense of a community of selves in which each of us is at one and the same time a member and the Community as a whole "in a peculiar way." The Universal Self, which is the true self of every creature, is

an Eternal City of selves, ever united and ever arriving at the knowledge of their union with each other.<sup>2</sup>

The deepest self of a man is less an individual than it is a kingdom. The Soul is not a unit, it is a Democracy.

<sup>1</sup> T. D., p. 324.

<sup>2</sup> A. C., p. 76.

## CHAPTER III

### DEMOCRACY

"Fed with the blood and tears of living things,  
Nourished and strengthened by Creation's woes,  
The god unborn, that shall be King of kings,  
Sown in the darkness, through the darkness grows."

ROBERT BUCHANAN

#### ARGUMENT

*Democracy, which Carpenter defines as the "rule of the Mass-man in the unit-man," is used in a mystical sense. Statically, it is the love-kingdom realized in the heart, but it urges dynamically to the creation of social structure. In the present social body, Democracy exists in potentiality, "a body within the body," after the fashion of the imago within the larval covering. Its gradual deliverance therefrom is the ultimate significance of all changes in social structure, the "telos" of all world-movements; it determines these from within; it is a spiritual plasm which creates its own body, under the protection of existing organization which in time must be either assimilated or discarded. Beginning first as Feeling in the individual heart, its progress to realization in social organization (especially on a world-scale) is slow; but ever and again it may be expected to leap forward into*



*manifestation in a "great individual," one who will come to be acknowledged as a Master and a Saviour.*

THIS is one of the critical words in Carpenter's teaching. His usage of it is peculiar, and must be thoroughly grasped at the outset, since it is the key to a large portion of his writings.

By "Democracy" Carpenter does not mean some definite form of political organization and government; in announcing the word, he is standing in a region which lies behind organization and is prior to it. In the phrase "Towards Democracy" some form of organization is obviously implied, but the emphasis throughout is upon the Idea which ever tends to take form, upon the Spirit which always creates its own body. "Democracy" is conceived after the fashion of one of the Platonic Ideas; and the word is used chiefly in a mystical, idealistic, religious sense. It is the mood of the world-soul which, in the eternal process of self-utterance and self-realization, creates, fulfils, and destroys organized forms and remains identical and equal with the forms it creates. It is the "Son of Man" which, ascending to its perfect blossom, exfoliates like a Tree of Life into human races (branches) and human individuals (leaves).

Regarding it in its more static aspect, Carpenter says

## 38 CENTRIPETAL AND CENTRIFUGAL

the Great Self sums itself up to form a vast affiliation of selves—a Celestial City of equals and lovers.<sup>1</sup>

As we have seen in the previous chapter, this “Great Self” is the most inward and true self of each individual; the individual becomes conscious of his identity with it by a process of inward withdrawal from the surface-planes of normal self-consciousness;

here in this perennial, immeasurable consciousness sleeping within us we come again to our Celestial City, our Home from which as individuals we proceed, but from which we are never really separated;<sup>2</sup>

and when we touch this inner depth, learning in experience our true identity, we realize for the first time in our life the meaning of Joy and Rest and Deliverance.

Let it not be imagined, however, that the Way of Life ends with this consciousness of individual blessedness; the centripetal movement is necessarily followed by, indeed coexists with, a centrifugal. What has been said, in classical passages, of Jesus and of Gautama, is true of all those who really attain to union with the Universal Self—they “count it not a thing to be grasped at, to be equal with God,” but find the “way of down-going,” as Nietzsche calls it, and humble themselves, taking upon themselves the form of a servant. This is less of choice than of necessity;

<sup>1</sup> *A. C.*, p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 206.

for to be identified with the Great Self is to become one with the Creative Life which is ever proceeding forth from itself to find a more perfect form of utterance and realization. To become one with the Universal, in whatsoever degree, is, in that degree, to become part of the creative effort and redemptive passion which unceasingly operates in the world. The world-burden is always borne upon the shoulders of the mystic, the idealist, the saint, the lover.

It is this dynamic aspect of the Great Self, of "Democracy," which Carpenter chiefly emphasizes. It is something which is tremendously urgent in the heart of the individual and of society. It is the ever-ascending life. It is something which forms, grows, expands within, and ever and anon bursts forth and breaks through, bringing disorganization and destruction to existing forms that it may create the higher form. It is a perpetual Will to new incarnation, new creation.

Carpenter speaks of it as a "body within the body."

The figure behind this phrase is that of the imago, or perfect insect, being preformed within the larva. Underneath the larval covering, all the while the normal life of the larva is proceeding, the frame and fashion of the perfect insect dimly appear; sometimes its harder parts almost protrude from beneath the skin, so that the body of the imago seems to lie slumbering

there, enfolded in a thin, half-transparent birth-shroud. In due time this protective sac bursts and falls away, and the insect is liberated, unfolds its wings, and rises into the life for which it has been prepared.

There can be but little doubt—if we may pause for a moment on this figure, for it is important—that the human order issued from the sub-human in some such fashion as this. The sub-human order was the larva, the human order the imago preformed within it. The human order arose out of the sub-human by a process inconceivably slow and inappreciably gradual. While the “animal kingdom” went on its usual way, lived out its normal life of alternating hunger and sleep, of wild, free loves and prolific seasonable births and deaths, the new kingdom was forming within it, a “body within the body.” Nothing but the patience of an infinite God could have watched with joy the first faint beginnings of human things,—the dawn of Reason, flicker after flicker with long intervals, like the coming of the grey light on a dull winter morning, only immeasurably protracted; the first pulses of what was to become Conscience, so faint, so germinal, so spasmodic, so easily quenched, so easily let slip, falling back again into the mystery out of which they came, with such painful, arduous slowness making their way, being rejected so many times, but always returning strangely reinforced; the breaking light of self-



consciousness emerging out of a group-consciousness, a herd-consciousness ; one individual opposing itself to all the rest, either by some accident of circumstance, or by some dimly-conceived, ill-directed, slackly-held purpose ; the seemingly interminable stretches of half-light, the ages-long twilight of the coming race ; not to be hurried, tarrying long, for the ascending life must have a fitting organism wherethrough to express itself, and the requisite physical and physiological changes could only be accomplished by infinitesimal steps.

The suggestion is of an imago forming itself within, and ultimately issuing from, the larval covering ; and one of the central affirmations in Carpenter's gospel is that something of this kind is happening within the structure of modern society. He surveys the present social order, and does not by any means blind himself to the wrong and evil things that are manifest therein. It is like a ghastly panorama, he says, passing before the eye of the spirit ; it is full of disease, weariness, and suffering ; the cancer of greed and selfishness has its roots entwined in the vitals ; it is subject to sudden accidents which plunder the world of valuable lives, devastate homes, and fling whole communities into mourning and sadness ; death and destruction roam to and fro over its length and breadth. He does not deny these things, or try to explain them away ; but affirms that they are, after all, larval, surface

## 42 THE BODY WITHIN THE BODY

things. Looking deeper, and seeing clearly, he announces :

Then somehow, underneath it all,  
I seem to see that the strands of affection and love,  
Auroral, shooting from one to another—so tender, so true and life-long,

And longer than life—holding together the present and past generations ;

The currents of love and thought streaming in the watches of the night from far and near, from one to another,

(Streaming all the more powerfully for the very hindrances and disasters which arrive or threaten,)

And building in the bustle of the day such likeness of their dreams as may be,—

That these inner are after all more real in some sense than the outer things—that they surpass in actual vitality and significance even all this artillery of horrors.

I dream that these are the fibres and nerves of a body that lies within the outer body of society,

A network, an innumerable vast interlocked ramification, slowly being built up—all dear lovers and friends, all families, groups, all peoples, nations, all times, all worlds perhaps—

Of which the outer similitudes and shells, like the minute cells of an organism, are shed and die in endless multitudes with continual decay and corruption ;

But the real individuals persist and are members of a Body, archetypal, eterne,

Glorious, the centre and perfection of life and organization,

And the source of all the Light in the universe.<sup>1</sup>

Evangel indeed ! It announces that the varied and manifold “ good work ” done here and there

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 492.

throughout society by individuals and groups,—by saints, heroes, reformers, saviours, lovers, nurses, sisters of mercy, *religieux*, quiet kindly folk, and all ministering spirits ; by churches, philanthropic organizations, scientific movements, legislative enactments, hospitals, crèches, reformatories, *cantines maternelles*, infant care, personal service, sympathetic strikes, old-age pensions,—are not fragmentary and unrelated spasms (more or less prolonged) of love, dependent entirely upon the enthusiasm of the private heart ; no more unrelated are they than different water-jets, fountains, well-springs, and river-sources are unrelated which all arise from the same subterranean reservoir ; they are simply the more obviously protruding points of the more perfect society which is being preformed within the less perfect ; they reveal a “ body within the body,” and the greater part of that inner body—the true Democracy—is invisible, deeply-lying, subtly pervasive, ready to appear at unexpected places, and slowly being strengthened and fashioned from within. It announces also that the ultimately availing power does not necessarily lie with the things which, at any particular moment, may have the sceptre of authority ; that the real strength is not with the things which fill the largest space in the world, “ take the eye and have the price ” ; that it is both natural and inevitable that the inner should triumph over and supersede the outer ; and that



## 44 SOCIAL ORGANIZATION PROTECTIVE

the inward spiritual kingdom must liberate itself just as surely, and triumph gloriously over the world-kingdoms, whatsoever they may be, as the imago must at last ascend out of the shattered and discarded cerements of the larva.

It announces further—and not least welcome of all—that the larva is in no sense the enemy of the imago ; it bounds it close, lies upon it like a grave-cloth, is round it like a confine ; but this which looks like imprisonment is really protection. The imago's chance of perfection lies in this pressure and imprisonment of larval circumstance. So did the grossness, thickness, opaqueness of the sub-human order lie round the germinal human society as a protective covering rather than as an impeding limitation ; its walls were the walls of a womb, not of a tomb. Even so—though it requires a visionary to see it—the grosser and more carnal elements in human society, the things commonly spoken of as wrong and evil, the things we antagonize and strive to break down, the earthier heavier oppressive crust, the lower viler body, are but the encasement which lies round the as yet unformed higher organism ; they call for a resistance, in the offering of which the inner Body becomes more and more compact together ; we fight against them, not simply because it would be better that they should not be there, but in order that we may be able to stand the firmer when they shall be overcome,

This figure and its implications have detained us ; but the time will not have been wasted, if the figure is allowed to remain now as a general scheme in the mind ; it will give point and significance to many apparently obscure and irrelevant passages in *Towards Democracy* which, after the lapse of thirty years, remains not only the most original, profound, and inspired of all Carpenter's writing, but also one of the few works of real genius which have appeared within the memory of any living man.

In the study of the Old Testament it is at times a perplexing problem to make sure whether the first personal pronoun stands for the individual who is actually uttering the words, or for the nation as a whole, or for a group within the nation. A quite similar question arises in regard to *Towards Democracy*—who, or what, is the " I " ? Carpenter himself has said that he does not know. His sole confession is that he has striven at all times to be perfectly genuine and true to his feeling, using terms—without too much laboured reflection upon them—which seemed to make most vividly clear what he felt and saw. Examining the internal evidence of the writings themselves, we shall find that sometimes the content of the " I " is intensely individual, and sometimes intensely sympathetic, practically universal.

If I am not level with the lowest I am nothing ; and if I did not know for a certainty that the craziest sot in

the village is my equal, and were not proud to have him walk with me as my friend, I would not write another word—for in this is my strength.<sup>1</sup>

Here the consciousness is poignantly individual; but on the very next page the "I" is equated with Nature.

I am the ground; I listen the sound of your feet. They come nearer. I shut my eyes and feel their tread over my face.

I am the trees; I reach downward my long arms and touch you, though you heed not, with enamoured fingers; my leaves and zigzag branches write wonderful words against the evening sky—for you, for you—say, can you not even spell them? <sup>2</sup>

Still again, in many passages,<sup>3</sup> the "I" is quite evidently the world-soul, Democracy itself, becoming articulate.

Perhaps, bearing in mind what was said in the last chapter, it is not necessary to distinguish too carefully between these different contents; they represent different strata of the same conscious personality, and vary—now deeper, now more superficial—with the mood, thought, or feeling, or outlook of the moment.

The poem *Towards Democracy* opens with a great burst of joy, a pæan of the deliverance of the soul into the Universal Life:

I breathe the sweet æther blowing of the breath of God.

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. *Ibid.*, pp. 16, 28, 33.

Deep as the universe is my life—and I know it; nothing can dislodge the knowledge of it; nothing can destroy, nothing can harm me.<sup>1</sup>

For the moment, the soul is content to bathe itself, dancing and laughing, in the waves of this new-found delight—"I dash me with amorous wet," as Whitman puts it; but anon the consciousness of union with nature and all humanity passes into the sense of power, especially of redemptive power:

O child of mine!

See! you are in prison, and I can give you space;

You are choked down below there, by the dust of your own raising, and I can give you the pure intoxicating air of the mountains to breathe;

I can make you a king, and show you all the lands of the earth;

And from yourself to yourself I can deliver you.<sup>2</sup>

And when the freed soul surveys "all the lands of the earth" they look different from what they did before; a new interest and hope arises; the gaze does not terminate in externals, but penetrates beneath them, and wherever it penetrates it beholds the promise of the ascending life, the grain within the husk, the birth within the agony. Flash the understanding eyes east and west, backward and forward along the river of human life—

Mighty long-delaying vagrant stream! Of innumerable growing rustling life! Out of some cavern mouth

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

long ago where the cave-dwellers sat gnawing burnt bones, down to to-day—with ever-growing tumult, and glints of light upon thee in the distance as of half-open eyes, and the sound of countless voices out of thee, nearer, nearer, past promontory after promontory winding, widening, hastening!—<sup>1</sup>

and all the process of history is unified and explained by the vision of the slow rising from within of the Son of Man, the true, the human society, Democracy. Its final emergence will not be without a struggle, for the crust is thick and the husk is tough ; there is no use in denying this, or in underrating the obstacles ; organized society is full of self-deceit, smooth-faced respectability, cowardice, infidelity, soul-stifling mechanism, rule-of-thumb morality, formal religion, mutual distrust, alienation from nature, greed, selfishness, slavery, conventionalism, the puppet dance of gentility, condescension, charitable proprietorship ; and heavily overlaid with a heaped-up mass of

exclusiveness, and of being in the swim ; of the drivel of aristocratic connections ; of drawing-rooms and levees and the theory of animated clothes-pegs generally ; of belonging to clubs and of giving pence to crossing-sweepers without apparently seeing them ; of helplessly living in houses with people who feed you, dress you, clean you, and despise you ; of driving in carriages ; of being intellectual ; of prancing about and talking glibly on all subjects on the theory of setting things right—and leaving others to do the dirty work of the world ;

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 11.



of having read books by the score, and being yet unable to read a single page ; of writing, and yet ignorant how to sign your name ; of talking about political economy and politics, and never having done a single day's labour in your life ; of being a magistrate or a judge, and never having committed a common crime, or been in the position to commit one ; of being a parson and afraid to be seen toying with Christ in a public ; a barrister and to travel in a third-class carriage ; an officer and to walk with one of your own men.<sup>1</sup>

All this, and much more that might be named of the same sort, is apparently enough to stifle, choke, strangle any pulse of spiritual idealistic life ; and truly there are many hearts of men and women that are exhausted, prostrated, bruised, broken, and brought nigh unto death beneath it ; but Democracy passes in and out among all, touching all, forgetting none, giving everywhere the answers of faithfulness, understanding everything, despising nobody, accepting all, waiting its own time, and ever bearing on ; delicate, frail, impalpable as it is, yet as sure to triumph over the oppressive incubus and smothering dead-weight of the *status quo*, as the growth from the living seed can force its way through, and shatter, the asphalt road. It is bound to come. The meanings slowly unfold, but the full word shall at last be uttered, resuming and making all plain, the End which was in the Beginning. Democracy cannot be deceived, and cannot fail ; “ I shall arrive.”

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 26.

As it ever was and will be—

As a thief in the night, silently and where you least expect,

Unlearned perhaps, without words, without arguments, without influential friends or money—leaning on himself alone—

Without accomplishments and graces, without any liniments for your old doubts, or recipes for constructing new theological or philosophical systems—

With just the whole look of himself in his eyes,—

The Son of Man shall—yes, shall—appear in your midst. O beating heart, your lover and your judge shall appear.

He will not bring a new revelation ; he will not at first make any reply to the eager questions about death and immortality ; he will present no stainless perfection ;

But he will do better : he will present something absolute, primal—the living rock—something necessary and at first-hand, and men will cling to him therefor ;

He will restore the true balance ; he will not condemn, but he will be absolute in himself ;

He will be the terrible judge to whom every one will run ;

He will be the lover and the judge in one.<sup>1</sup>

For the moment, however, Democracy tarries ; sometimes it seems as one who sleeps enmeshed in dreams :

I see the stretched sleeping figure—waiting for the kiss and the reawakening.<sup>2</sup>

But its issue is predetermined—even now it appears to be opening its eyes and peeping—and with it shall emerge faithfulness, self-reliance,

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.



self-help, passionate comradeship, and freedom. Slowly it disentangles itself. . . . Then the soul of the visionary, like a submarine suddenly dropping to lower oceanic levels, withdraws into the deeper regions of consciousness, no longer surveys the constructed order from without, but enters within the life-stream that laves all shores, becomes aware of itself as Democracy, and, as a Divine Artist, entering into all experience. He feels his identity with each ; and the experience of each as his very own.

In silence I wait and accept all.

I am a painter on the house-side. . . . I help the farmer drive his cattle home. . . . I go mowing in the early morning while the twilight creeps in the north-east. . . . I am one of the people who spend their lives sitting on their haunches in drawing-rooms. . . . I enter the young prostitute's chamber. . . . I dance at the village feast. . . .<sup>1</sup>

It matters not who it may be—the young woman at the refreshment bar, or the military-looking official at the door of the hotel ; the railway lamp-foreman, or the bright sunny girl-child with poignant blossoming lips and eyes ; it matters not what the experience may be—winter or summer, day or night, eastern or western, youthful or aged, facile or struggling, average or exceptional, chaste or unchaste, wild or regular, pagan or Christian, primitive or civilized, anxious or careless ; he unifies and

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 67.

embraces it all within himself ; it is his own ; he seems to spread himself as the common soul beneath it all ; he arises into a new significance through it all ; he comes to you who are now reading these words, touches you, holds you for a space—

Hand in hand for an hour I sit with you in the Great Garden of Time<sup>1</sup> ;

he might just as well stop with you for ever, for the end of all things is with you as well as with every one else, but he arises and passes, he departs, yet never to depart again.

And I heard (in the height) another voice say,  
I AM.

In the recluse, the thinker, the incurable and the drudge, I AM. I am the giver of Life, I am Happiness.

I am in the good and evil, in the fortunate and the unfortunate, in the gifted and the incapable, alike ; I am not one more than the other.

The lion roaring in its den, and the polyp on the floor of the deep, the great deep itself, know ME.

The long advances of history, the lives of men and women—the men that scratched the reindeer and mammoth on bits of bone, the Bushmen painting their rude rock-paintings, the mud-hovels clustering round mediæval castles, the wise and kindly Arab with his loving boy-attendants, the Swiss mountain-herdsman, the Russian patriot, the English mechanic,

Know ME. I am Happiness in them, in all—underlying. I am the Master, showing myself from time to time as occasion serves.

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 97.

I am not nearer to one than the other ; they do not seek me so much as I advance through them.<sup>1</sup>

This, then, is Democracy, according to Carpenter's use of the term ; a body within the body ; the slowly ascending love-kingdom ; the ultimate truth of Society,—not waiting our arrival at the end of a long history of social experiment and reform, but itself determining from within each revolution, each rearrangement of parts, each restatement of function. From the outside, we appear to be seeking through antagonisms and failures to discover the perfect political and social organization ; from the inside, which is the truth-side, that Perfect Thing is seeking to utter itself amid the intractableness of materials, among which our human minds and wills are by no means the least difficult of handling. Democracy is like a spiritual plasm hidden deep within the secrets of human society ; and as the human body is the ark of the germ-plasm, so is the *status quo* to Democracy, protecting it until time and opportunity serve for it to go forth in creative pulses to the fashioning of another body. Democracy exists first as feeling, consciousness, potency, but contains within itself the inalienable and irresistible possibility of the destruction of all established organization whatsoever, breaking this down and issuing to form new structure.

It is important to lay tenacious hold on this

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 108.

## 54 REVELATION AND REFORMATION

fact of the priority of the inwardness of Democracy. All social watchwords are, first of all, spiritual facts. *Nihil in intellectu*, they used to say, *quod non fuerit in sensu* ; and nothing is in society as organized which was not first in the heart. All proceeds from within. Structure follows desire, as desire follows vision. Revelation precedes reformation. The seer is prior to the doer. The practical man—liable to become the idol of the modern world—would be impotent were it not for the dreamer. The lover and the saint make possible the effective labours of the statesman and the statistician. The builder waits upon the man who talks with God in the Mount. The man who generates and spreads abroad from his own vital centre sincere, true, profound feeling has a more important place in the building up of the social fabric than the man who establishes an institution. The birth of a new feeling, or a new idea, strikes the hour of doom for ancient and deep-rooted thrones. The philosopher rationalizes the intuition of the prophet ; the scientist formulates the imagination of the poet ; the reformer institutionalizes the vision of the mystic. Liberty, Equality, Fraternity derive all their power as social watchwords, and all their significance for social organization, because they are already realities in the heart. The reason why it is not possible suddenly to make all men free by some forcible altering of external relationships in society ; the reason why, if such arrange-



ments could be made at once, disaster would be inevitable ; is because Freedom is not an endowment which simply waits the opportunity for its exercise—that is to say, all men would not be free if they had the chance. Freedom is an attainment, something to be won, disentangled, realized in the heart first, and the needful arrangements for its exercise in external relationships will follow naturally and certainly ; indeed, inward attainment and outward arrangement are but the aspects of the same one process.

To affirm these things is to affirm the necessary function of Religion in Society. Carpenter says here and there some hard things against the Church, and most of the things he says are justified. An institution cannot, in the nature of things, be perfectly true to its Ideal, and is bound to manifest a progressive falling-short (if the oxymoron may be allowed) from the primal purity of the spiritual impulse which brought it into being ; and the Church is no exception.

But Religion is not to be identified with the Church as an organization, or with its theologies and sacraments. Religion in its broadest sense,—the bond which links the individual with the universal, the temporal with the eternal, the actual with the ideal, practical movement with underlying spiritual purpose ; the unifier ; the common denominator of all effort and aspiration ; faith in the invisible ; belief in the Infinite manifesting in the finite ; belief in the bigger life

which oceans mortality ; belief in the transcendence of That whose immanence is the secret of every created thing ; the unfailing and frank witness to the permanent, whose manifold forms change, but itself abides ; commerce and communion—in prayer, praise, meditation, silence, and all self-losing—with the Unseen ; and all this, issuing in reverence, humility, patience, optimism, venturesomeness, self-reliance, love ;—Religion in this sense is the first vital necessity for the health, stability, and progress of Society.

Carpenter does not traffic in the jargon of the churches, but names matter little ; the fact, the experience, is the thing ; and Democracy, as he interprets it, is essentially a religious fact ; right well does he speak of its development through the ages, in a memorable phrase, as

the organic growth of God himself in Time<sup>1</sup> ;

and one of his own names for it is “ the Master ”—

Where the Master is there is paradise.<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, allowing for differences of philosophical system and general outlook, there is much profound similarity, reaching almost to identity, between Carpenter's *Democracy* and the “ Christ ” of the New Testament.

From what has been said, the importance also of the place and value of the individual to De-

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 353.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 233.



mocracy will be clear. Walt Whitman, the "poet of Democracy," cried,

Underneath all, individuals.

Produce great men, he said, and the rest follows. Carpenter's theory reveals the implicit logic of this challenging assertion. There is no real incompatibility between Individualism and Socialism. In their extreme forms they only represent the opposite terminal positions of the same pendulum. The inner self of the individual is a society, a kingdom. Democracy appears first in the individual heart.

In the deep cave of the heart, far down,

Running under the outward shows of the world and of people,

Running under geographies, continents, under the fields and the roots of the grasses and trees, under the little thoughts and dreams of men, and the history of races,

Deep, far down,

I see feel and hear wondrous and divine things.

Voices and faces are there; arms of lovers, known and unknown, reach forward and fold me;

Words float, and fragrance of Time ascends, and Life ever circling.<sup>1</sup>

Just as it is true that most men are better than their creed, and this is the ground of expectation for the formulation of higher and truer expres-

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 335.

sions of faith, so also the hearts of most men are broader than the artificial limitations, deeper than the conventional standards, of the social organization wherein they are placed, and this is the ground of the expectation of the truer, more human society. Many a man continues to live more or less satisfactorily within the prison-house of public opinion, in whose heart throb the pulses of personal liberty which make him inwardly a defier and scorner of the powers-that-be, and which, should they find adequate expression in action, would probably make him an outcast. Many a man, bowing the knee in the House of Rimmon, conforming daily to the conventions and codes of his class, has a heart big enough to receive and embrace all men in equality and brotherhood. All such men are the potential saviours and redeemers of the world. If the world could become outwardly that which their hearts are inwardly, the agony of the ages would be accomplished, the perfect society would be here. And surely it shall come; for they carry the foreshadowing and promise of it with them. But, alas! the Will lags; the bonds are many, the fetters are heavy; the outlet is not apparent, and they cannot break through the thickset since the Inward Reality does not find all at once a power equal to its authority. They wait the arrival of the great individual, the Christ who descends to the spirits in prison. They themselves are the promise of the great individual;

they are his body ; they wait their Head. They wait the emergence from among them of him who will summon their slack and fragmentary powers, unify their forces, represent them, make their potential energy kinetic, fashion them into an organism, deliver themselves to themselves, express in terms of erect, challenging, independent Manhood that which is embryonic in them. He comes as the light-beam upon the explosive engine. He comes as Siegfried to cut the restraining links of the heavy overlaying armour, to awaken the sleeping Brunhilde with a kiss, to set her free into the true divine knowledge and power of Love, and from that love-union to create the new race which at once destroys and fulfils the old.

This great individual is Democracy articulated, personalized. He is, *par excellence*, the Master, the Saviour. Democracy is the content of his heart ; the quality, the orientation, of his spirit. He is the " kingdom that is among you." He is the leader of an invisible host ; he is the host ; the host is his brood. What happens to him as an individual matters not ; he is the " semen of Democracy " ; he impregnates the womb of Time, and all the invincible powers of the universe watch over his offspring.

Of his own power and peace and joy we shall now have to write more in detail ; and since he is himself the potency of the Love-kingdom, since its reality is with him, since what is con-

sciousness in him shall become, in course of time, organization in the world, the power and peace and joy which appear as his private possessions will prove to be the vouchsafers of the gifts which wait in the secret for all humankind.

## CHAPTER IV

### NATURE AND A NATURAL LIFE

" And Death no longer terrible, but full  
Of poignant strange Expansion ; Labour too  
(Which is our daily death  
And resurrection in the thing created)  
An ever-abiding joy—  
A life so near to Nature, all at one with bird and plant  
and swimming thing,  
So near to all its fellows in sweet love—  
In joy unbounded and undying love."

EDWARD CARPENTER.

#### ARGUMENT

" *Towards Democracy* " issues from a soul which had homed itself in the heart of Nature. It evinces, therefore, an intimate love of all natural things, and pleads for a life in closer co-operation and association with the Great Mother. Carpenter's feeling for Nature is simple, direct, glowing ; to live in her bosom is the Open Secret ; she is intensely alive and even personal ; at times she will take her lover into her embraces, and the boundaries of individuality will be transcended. All natural things are pure, all natural functions are sacred ; the Body is the dwelling-place of the gods ; and Death can only be an enlargement of life. The modern Western world is largely divorced from Nature ;



*the centralization of population, the elaboration of machinery, the hardening of conventions, and the teaching of the Church help to account for this; the result is much unreality and infidelity. A return to a more natural life is imperative; the way of this return is not easily indicated, and Carpenter contents himself for the most part with depicting the kind of human society which would thereby arise; he would create and reinforce the will to a more natural life, sure that it would find its own way.*

WE have now to examine some of the principal characteristics of this Democracy in the heart, as evidenced in Carpenter's own experience.

Reference has several times been made to a surface consciousness and a deeper consciousness, to an outer self and an inner self, and to this latter as being a social self; and it will be convenient to retain for a time this notion of an inward descent, as it were, along a vertical line. The figure is of a cone whose sectional circles continually increase in radius as the perpendicular from the apex approaches the base. If we imagine consciousness deepening from the apex of separate individuality, it is natural to suppose that it picks up the strands of a wider and ever wider life as it descends, and passes from smaller to greater unities. Moments of pause in this line of descent are artificial enough, and are simply points in a logical analysis; if any "schema"



of the experience is offered, it must be with the necessary proviso that the "spirit bloweth where it listeth," and irregularity here may be the rule; and further, that the particular kind of experience here referred to is, as yet, comparatively so rare, and the scientific study of it so rudimentary, that its type or norm—if there be such—has not yet been clearly defined.

But there is a certain *a priori* probability, if the evolutionary hypothesis be accepted, that, since human individuality has arisen from the cosmic life as the term of a certain process, the return journey (if we may so speak of it) into conscious union with the universal should pass through similar stages in the reverse order. That is to say, the first unity realized by the deepening consciousness would be a unity with one's fellow-men, in narrower and wider groups—the family, for example, the clan, the tribe, the nation. The second and profounder unity would be that of the spiritual continuum which is the basis of humanity as a whole, and which may be called the Ideal Humanity, or the Christ, or the Son of Man. The third unity would be that of the still wider organism of Nature.

It is not suggested that this logical order is the actual psychological order; nor is it affirmed that every individual who attains "cosmic consciousness" passes through these various strata with any definite quality of feeling relating to each in turn. Most probably this is not the case.

"Love," as Carpenter reminds us, "whether taken in its most ideal or its most sensuous signification, is a form of the Cosmic Consciousness ; " a man who, in moments of ecstasy and enthusiasm, or along quieter ways, loses himself in the family, or the clan, realizes to that extent a true deliverance from the consciousness of separateness and a true self-emancipation, although he may never be conscious of original creative power, and may not be to any relevant degree a "lover of nature." His line of descent is arrested, for the time being at any rate, at the first unity. On the other hand, there are those who first experience the quickening of the Universal within them in touch with Nature ; they drop suddenly as it were from the apex of the cone to the base, and attain the widest unity at once, entering subsequently into the others (if at all) by a retroactive process, an aftermath of the great experience.

But for the purposes of this study we will take the scheme suggested by the figure of a cone, and associate with the first unity the idea of Equality, with the second that of Freedom, and with the third the subject of this present chapter.

In Carpenter's own case the psychological order appears to have been the reverse of the logical order as we have described it. He seems to have entered the third unity as a beginning. He has told us how *Towards Democracy* took shape in intimate association with the woods, fields, and streams ; it was uttered from the heart of Nature ;

and if we had not this autobiographical confession, there is sufficient internal evidence in the book itself to suggest it. We have seen how that, in those earlier days, he felt the call of the open air, and the demand laid like a necessity upon him for manual work. A cultured youth, intellectually well above the average, academically successful, and with considerable professional prospects, he seemed destined for another kind of career, but this insistent call was in his heart. It is the homing instinct in the soul. The return to Nature, in the sense that Carpenter made it, is the restoration of the exile; it is the "prodigal son," wasting his spiritual substance in the "far country" of intellectualism and mechanism, "coming to himself," arising, and returning (perhaps in this case we had better say) to the Mother.

The demand for manual work is a fundamental manifestation of the creative impulse. "To come near to understanding the use of materials is divine."<sup>1</sup> One of the most hopeful signs of modern times is the quickening of interest in the homelier arts and crafts on the part of educated and refined people. This fact has probably more significance for the future religious life of this country than any "new theology," or any Dis-establishment Bill, or any effort after the reunion of the churches. It is essentially a religious phenomenon. It is a revolt—at last!—against

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 97.

the tyranny of mechanism, the elaboration of which is the greatest existing threat against the soul of humanity ; for mechanism incessantly produces, without educating ; it copies, but does not create ; and to the extent that it standardizes, it despiritualizes. According as we manage machines, as Mr. Gerald Stanley Lee has so forcibly pointed out, we tend to become machines. How hardly shall they who perpetually handle machines enter the Kingdom of Heaven ! The greatest tragedy walking the streets of all our great centres of population is the tragedy of unused hands. We wait for our hands to give back to us the art of living and the secret of life. The division of labour, issuing in a multitude of mechanical perfections, has almost brought real human progress to a standstill.

It is not a question merely of the dignity of labour, about which much pious and false sentimentalism has been spoken ; it touches deeper than that ; labour with raw materials is like the creative agony of lovers, bruising and exhausting each other. It is like a child, or a lamb, or many a young thing, tugging and thrusting at the milk-breasts of its mother. There is a leisureliness, and an amplitude of setting, about all natural processes which give the right condition for soul-development to the man who is engaged with them—though it may not be the only condition. To see a whole process through from beginning to end oneself, to select the materials and literally

to manufacture the finished product, is to incarnate oneself, and that is to create. It may be a wheel, or a gem, or a crop, or a piece of fabric, or a sandal (as with Carpenter himself); and the man who tears a reed from the riverside and makes a pipe, and produces therewith maybe not even a melody, but only a bird-note or a love-call, performs a godlike act. Better make pipes with Pan than play a pianola. You will not get a living out of it, but much more than that. Happy the man who, even if it is only in the interstices of making a living, finds life. Happier he who is bold and venturesome enough to widen the interstices, until the Living and the Life exchange proportions, and change places.

There is something unique about Carpenter's feeling for Nature. It is extraordinarily simple, direct, naive. There are no purple patches to be quoted. This is one of his many distinctions. Let us open *Towards Democracy* at the first page, and take the passage that immediately presents itself for examination :

The sun shines, as of old ; the stars look down from heaven ; the moon, crescent, sails in the twilight ; on bushy tops in the warm nights, naked, with mad dance and song, the earth-children address themselves to love ;

Civilization sinks and swims, but the old facts remain—the sun smiles, knowing well its strength.

The little red stars appear once more on the hazel boughs, shining among the catkins ; over waste lands the pewit tumbles and cries as at the first day ; men with horses go out on the land—they shout and chide



and strive—and return again glad at evening ; the old earth breathes deep and rhythmically, night and day, summer and winter, giving and concealing herself.<sup>1</sup>

This is quite a characteristic passage. Notice, in passing, how impossible it is for Carpenter to keep “civilization” and “men” out of the picture ; for him, Nature is a seamless dress woven throughout from lowest to highest ; inanimate or animate, wild or civilized, subhuman or human—it is all of a piece ; he persists in seeing Man in his natural setting ; there is no question with him of turning from Man to Nature, or from Nature to God—all is one life ; he can only with difficulty think of them apart, so profoundly does he feel them to be one. Nature is not a background before which Man plays his brief part and then vanishes behind the scenes. The careful and scrupulous critic may pick out exceptions here and there to this high doctrine—as, for example, that deliciously humorous poem “Squinancy-Wort,” in which this little flower, having established its place on the earth long before Man came, having watched from its high places the ponderous tournaments of the giant sauroids, complains mildly that Man has come with his gift of giving a name to everything under the sun, and has rewarded its humble beauty and innocence with the burden and disgrace of so cacophonous an appellation—Squinancy-Wort !

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 3.



What have I done ? I linger  
 (I cannot say that I live)  
 In the happy lands of my birth ;  
 Passers-by point with the finger ;  
 For me the light of the sun  
 Is darkened. Oh, what would I give  
 To creep away and hide my shame in the earth !—  
 What have I done ?  
 Yet there is hope. I have seen  
 Many changes since I began.  
 The web-footed beasts have been  
 (Dear beasts !)—and gone, being part of some wider  
 plan.

Perhaps in his infinite mercy God will remove this Man !<sup>1</sup>

In such cases Carpenter is tilting with playful irony at the human delusion of separateness and the consequent sense of superiority, as one way of affirming the essential unity of all things, from the least even unto the greatest, in the One Life. Man is organic with the rest of creation ; and Carpenter cannot look into the eyes of the cattle in the field without seeing the human soul gazing out therefrom.

Although the reader of the specimen nature-passage just quoted will hardly fail to be aware of a certain charm which he may not be able at first to analyse and define, it will seem to him to be almost so simple and so matter-of-fact as to be commonplace.

Over waste lands the pewit tumbles and cries as at the first day.

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 153.

## 70 SIMPLICITY OF NATURE-PASSAGES

Compared with the fervent praises, the elaborate descriptions, the eloquent ecstasies of, say, Shelley, or Keats, or Meredith, or Browning, this will appear crude, and without form or comeliness. Yet it is very typical of Carpenter. Alike in the precision and the economy of the strokes he uses, he is the Phil May among nature-painters. Or, perhaps better, one may compare him to Giotto, who, deserting the formal, classical, artificial, stiff, heavily-gilded figures and compositions of his predecessors (say, Cimabue), determined to paint what he saw, and just as he saw it; brought back a natural realism to break down the tyranny of classical romanticism and idealism; in his frescoes, therefore, there is much that may be found fault with in the matter of drawing, for example, yet there is no doubt about the life, vigour, movement, naturalness of his compositions, nor about the vividness and concrete reality of the stories they are painted to tell.

The same fact may be stated in another way. Carpenter describes Nature as one who is at home in the world of natural phenomena—"at home" in the sense of the phrase as used in that lovely little poem "The Open Secret," which begins:

Sweet secret of the open air—

That waits so long, and always there, unheeded.

Something uncaught, so free, so calm large confident—

The floating breeze, the far hills and broad sky,

And every little bird and tiny fly or flower

*At home in the great whole, nor feeling lost at all or forsaken.*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> T. D., p. 376.

A stranger, entering a royal palace crowded with treasures on wall and ceiling, in chamber and corridor, will eulogize much that he sees and go near to exhausting his vocabulary in order to describe the magic and magnificence of it all ; all the more so, if he happen to be of a much lower rank and station in life, and unfamiliar with such splendid circumstance. The son of the royal house, however, will speak of the same things—no less aware of their beauty and value—in a different way.

There are great poets whose descriptions of Nature are in the manner of the stranger's ecstasies over the royal treasures. Carpenter's, on the contrary, are those of one who is as a son in his father's house. He has the facile touch of the boon companion moving among his intimates. It is enough for him to give the hint, knowing that the whole unspeakable splendour is there as part of the mind-texture of those to whom he speaks. He knows that the thing itself, plainly and vividly indicated, is far more lovely than any added vesture of words can make it. In other words, Carpenter does not speak to us of Nature, but rather allows us to overhear him speaking of it to himself.

In this he follows his own canon of Art :

Art can now no longer be separated from life ;

Her tutelage completed, she becomes equivalent to Nature, and hangs her curtains continuous with the clouds and waterfalls.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 264.

Consequently, the closer you yourself lie to Nature, and the more you are carried from the position of an external observer to stand within the secret of its inmost heart, the more instinct with truth and beauty will appear such passages (and they abound throughout Carpenter's writing) in which, at first sight perhaps, you found scarce anything to be desired.

We cannot pass from our typical quotation without noting another thing. To Carpenter, Nature is alive, one might almost say personally alive.

The old Earth breathes deep and rhythmically, night and day, summer and winter, giving and concealing herself.

It is not that Nature is simply animated, she is spiritually quick. It is a corollary of his theory of Creation, already expounded, that “ objects ” are not dead matter, but are “ other egos, and the egos enter into relation with each other.”<sup>1</sup> Objects are true selves; and what we call

Knowledge, Perception, Consciousness (in its ordinary form) are messages or modes of communication between various selves—words, as it were, by which intelligences come to expression, and become known to each other and themselves. All Nature we have to conceive as the countless interchange of communication between countless selves.<sup>2</sup>

All objects exist for the utterance of a spiritual Somewhat which is the ground of their manifesta-

<sup>1</sup> A. C., p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

tion and being. They are "saying" something to us who come to know them. Our truest knowledge of them is not biological, chemical knowledge, but is spiritual—our clearest reading of their message.

Carpenter's theory of Beauty<sup>1</sup> is based upon the same feeling. In effect, it is this. We get the sense of Beauty whenever the spiritual idea which is struggling for expression and utterance in us meets with and recognizes itself in objects presented to us. The beauty of an object, externally known, is related to its form to the extent that such form is perceived by us—maybe unconsciously—to be expressive of the same spiritual idea that utters itself in us. Beauty is the recognition of souls. Known internally, all objects would be beautiful, since then the recognition of unity would be complete; and we should thus be brought to the point from which Nietzsche announced his ideal "to see the necessary in all things as being beautiful."

Nature, then, is in reality an organism of spiritual selves. Carpenter glows with prophetic fervour in his affirmation of this fact.

In the woods a spirit walks which is not wholly of the woods,

But which looks out over the wide Earth and draws to itself all men with deep unearthly love.<sup>2</sup>

The poem entitled "Among the Ferns" may well be taken as the classical expression of it.

<sup>1</sup> *A. C.*, pp. 192 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 186.



In the silence of the greenwood I knew the secret of  
the growth of the ferns ;

I saw their delicate leaflets tremble, breathing an un-  
described and unuttered life ;

And, below, the ocean lay sleeping ;

And round them the mountains and the stars dawned  
in glad companionship for ever.

And a voice came to me, saying :

In every creature, in forest and ocean, in leaf and tree  
and bird and beast and man, there moves a spirit other  
than its mortal own,

Pure, fluid as air—intense as fire,

Which looks abroad and passes along the spirits of  
all other creatures, drawing them close to itself,

Nor dreams of other law than that of perfect equality ;

And this is the spirit of immortality and peace.

And whatsoever creature hath this spirit, to it no  
harm may befall ;

No harm can befall, for wherever it goes it has its  
nested home, and to it every loss comes charged with an  
equal gain ;

It gives—but to receive a thousand-fold ;

It yields its life—but at the hands of love ;

And death is the law of its eternal growth.

And I saw that was the law of every creature—that  
this spirit should enter in and take possession of it,

That it might have no more fear or doubt or be at war  
within itself any longer.

And lo ! in the greenwood all around me it moved,

Where the sunlight floated fragrant under the boughs,  
and the fern-fronds winnowed the air ;

In the oak-leaves dead of last year, and in the small  
shy things that rustled among them ;

In the songs of the birds, and the broad shadowing  
leaves overhead ;

In the fields sleeping below, and in the river and the  
high dreaming air ;



Gleaming ecstatic it moved—with joy incarnate.

And it seemed to me, as I looked, that it penetrated all these things, suffusing them ;

And wherever it penetrated, behold ! there was nothing left down to the smallest atom which was not a winged spirit instinct with life.<sup>1</sup>

It is one thing, however, to theorize about Nature as an organism of selves entering into relations with each other, and it is another thing to be conscious of one's identity with Nature in actual experience. The former arises out of the latter ; that is to say, all that has just been written about Carpenter's peculiar feeling for Nature, and his doctrines concerning it, are the formulation in artistic and intellectual terms of his experience of being conscious in what we have called the third unity. There is nothing for us to do here except to receive the personal witness. Such testimonies are constantly multiplying, and there is no reason to doubt either the sanity or the sincerity of those who offer them. It is apparently possible for an individual to enter a deeply inward and practically boundless area of consciousness in which the ordinary boundaries of individuality are dissolved or submerged, and the man becomes aware not simply of “ something far more deeply interfused,” but that he himself is that Something. It is as if the consciousness of the mountain-peak, descending down through its own heart, and without losing

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 181.

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its own self-awareness, should experience its identity with the range-consciousness, and more deeply still with the matrix-consciousness of that earth-crust in which the ranges are rooted.

It must be exceedingly difficult to give literary expression to this profound experience ; and not less difficult for those whose lives are usually far removed from that mystic region to discover any sense—as they would say—in words which attempt to describe it. Such an attempt Carpenter has made in a poem entitled “ By the Shore.”

I am a bit of the shore ; the waves feed upon me, they come pasturing over me ;

I am glad, O waves, that you come pasturing over me.

I am a little arm of the sea ; the same tumbling, swooning dream goes on—I feel the waves all around me, I spread myself through them.

How delicious ! I spread and spread. The waves tumble through and over me—they dash through my face and hair. . . .

Suddenly I am the Ocean itself ; the great soft wind creeps over my face.

I am in love with the wind—I reach my lips to its kisses. . . .

I am not sure any more which my own particular bit of shore is ;

All the bays and inlets know me ; I glide along in and out under the sun by the beautiful coast-line ;

My hair floats leagues behind me ; millions together my children dash against my face ;

I hear what they say and am marvellously content.<sup>1</sup>  
And then the inevitable transition of thought and feeling to Humanity :

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 192.

I know but I do not care any longer which my own particular body is—all conditions and fortunes are mine.

By the ever-beautiful coast-line of human life, by all shores, in all climates and countries, by every secluded nook and inlet,

Under the eye of my beloved Spirit I glide ;

O joy ! for ever, ever, joy !

I am not hurried—the whole of eternity is mine ;

With each one I delay, with each one I dwell—with you I dwell. . . .

I take the thread from the fingers that are weary, and go on with the work ;

The secretest thoughts of all are mine, and mine are the secretest thoughts of all.

The working-out of this general attitude and feeling towards Nature into all its details is beyond the scope of the present study. We may delay, however, to see it operating in reference to two conspicuous natural facts—the Body and Death. There are few better solvents than Carpenter's writings for one of the radical errors of traditional Christian teaching—namely, that the flesh is essential enmity against the spirit, that there is a necessary schism between body and soul, that, at best, the body is something to be perpetually fought against, constantly suppressed and subdued, and, at worst, something to be “ cut off,” or “ plucked out,” and cast from us. Carpenter's attitude towards the body is entirely positive and healthy. He admits the value of pain and discipline ; no one affirms with greater emphasis the necessity of mastery ; but all this is with a view to gaining the full enjoyment and

use of the body, not to crushing it and keeping it under. The body is not meant to be a constant menace; but to become a dear companion. "Nor soul helps flesh," said Browning, "more than flesh helps soul." "The body is a root of the soul."<sup>1</sup> It is as if the plane of mortality were an underground world; what we see here of each other are such portions of ourselves as are buried in the soil of finitude; the soul is blossoming on another plane, but draws part of its subsistence from mortal experience, which is mediated through the body as through a root. There is no more sense in asceticism, as ordinarily conceived and usually practised by religious devotees, than there is in starving and bleeding the roots of a plant, though there is such a thing as root-pruning against rank fruitless growth.

Regarded in another way—as we have already seen—the body is the race-mind made visible, it is our race-inheritance made available. It is stupid to squander that inheritance, but no less stupid to put it under lock and key. The great ideals of the race, which Carpenter calls the gods, focus for the individual in the physiological centres of the body.

The body is not vile. It is not only a Temple of God, but it is a collection of temples; and just as the images of the gods dwell in the temples of a land, and are the objects of service and the centres of command there, so, we may say, the gods themselves dwell in the centres

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 37.

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and sacred places of the body. Every organ and centre of the body is the seat of some great emotion, which in its proper activity and due proportion is truly divine. It is through this bodily and physiological centre that the emotion, the enthusiasm, that portion of the Divine Being, expresses itself; and in the pure and perfect body that expression, that activity, is itself a revelation. The total physiology of Man is, or should be, the nearest expression of divinity complete, and the replica or image of the physiology of the Cosmos itself.<sup>1</sup>

With outlook no less positive, optimistic, natural, does Carpenter view the fact of physical death—of the other form of death, the death to self, we shall have to deal in another place.<sup>2</sup> He lays the ancient ghost. Death is the friend, the “far-infolder.” It is the angel of deliverance.

Here in this prison-cell while the walls grow thicker—  
of all I was a little spark waits yet its liberation.

Come quickly, Death, and loose this last remainder  
of me—shatter the walls,

Break down this body of mine, and let me go.<sup>3</sup>

In one of his finest poems, he reminds us of the fact—obvious enough to all who will reflect a little—that while we are children we do not possess our childhood; it is only our later life which gives us possession of it. It is when we leave it behind that we really hold it.

Now, leaving it all,

The window truly for you will never stand open again,

<sup>1</sup> *A. C.*, p. 161.

<sup>2</sup> Vide *The Drama of Love and Death*.

<sup>3</sup> *T. D.*, p. 330.



nor the sweet night-air through it blow—never again for you on the little coverlet of your bed will the moonlight fall ;

And yet mayhap for the first time will the wind really blow and the moonlight fall,

For the first time shall you really see the face of your father whom you used to meet so often on the stairs.

All the spaces and corners of the house, and the swinging of the doors, and the tones and voices of those behind them, shall be full of meanings which were hidden from you while you dwelt among them.<sup>1</sup>

Basing upon some such experience as this, he rises to the generalization that we "take by leaving," we "hold by letting go" <sup>2</sup>; and applies the Law thus formulated to Death.

When at last Death comes, then all of Life shall be to us as the house of our childhood—

For the first time we shall really possess it.<sup>3</sup>

Death is the great revealer. It strips off the mask. It is the wind that drives away the delusive earth-mists. The night of death will make clear that which has been long hidden from us by the light-curtain of the day of Life. We live tented in mortality. There is no other world than Here ; and Eternity is Now. In reality, we exist in a great world, full of visions and glories and immortal presences ; with boundless horizons, endless vistas, roofed by Infinity. But we are in a tent. Within its narrow confines we go about our work, consort with friends, gaining what may

<sup>1</sup> *T D.*, p. 501

*Ibid.*, p. 500.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 502½

be from love and hate, joy and sorrow ; we have our familiar furniture, our dear household gods. Many there are who imagine that this is all their world. But for others, who find from time to time leisure from themselves, peeps of the bigger life which oceans our mortality come through chinks in the tent-wall, ghostly presences cast their shadows on the threshold or on the curtained doorway, and far sounds come floating in ; maybe, at times, a few will make timid, or venturesome, excursions a little way outside the tent-door ; but for the most part we are confined within this " our house of tabernacle " and live in ignorance, if not without hope, of the Infinite Circumstance, the world of immortality where " the great Voices sound and Visions dwell." Death removes the tent, and lets us out into the larger life which has always surrounded us, but from which the tent has cut us off.

The change will be like that, though it may not be sudden as that. Perhaps the tent is manifold, and many deaths will be needed to deliver us into the perfect knowledge and the perfect life. Yet if the change be an æonial process, its progression is irresistible, and its end sure.

Death shall change as the light in the morning changes ;  
 Death shall change as the light 'twixt moonset and dawn.<sup>1</sup>

No wonder that the man who had these feelings

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 184.

and thoughts of Nature calls the world of men back from its many quests and wanderings into communion with the Great Mother, and pleads, by "opening the door," for a more natural, less artificial life.

It is a perfectly legitimate question to ask precisely what Carpenter means by a return to a more natural life. It may be said at once that one so eminently sane and sympathetic as he is has no desire to tantalize us with a policy of perfection; he would not make us all farmers and dairymaids; nor does he propound a house in the country as a panacea for all our evils and woes.

One or two quotations will make clear the direction away from which, at any rate, his mind is looking. In the poem already referred to, "The Open Secret," he speaks of man as the one being who is not "at home" in the world:

He, Cain-like, from the calm eyes of the Angels,  
In houses hiding, in huge gas-lighted offices and dens,  
in ponderous churches,  
Beset with darkness, cowers;  
And like some hunted criminal torments his brain  
For fresh means of escape continually;  
Builds thicker higher walls, ramparts of stone and  
gold, piles flesh and skins of slaughtered beasts,  
'Twixt him and that he fears;  
Fevers himself with plans, works harder and harder,  
And wanders far and farther from the goal.  
And still the great World waits by the door as ever,  
The great World stretching endlessly on every hand,  
in deep on deep of fathomless content—

Where sing the Morning-stars in joy together,  
And all things are at home.<sup>1</sup>

With genuine passion, and prophetic warning  
to a world taking the wrong way, he cries, in  
another place :

O gracious Mother, in thy vast eternal sunlight  
Heal us, thy foolish children, from our sins ;  
Who heed thee not, but careless of thy Presence  
Turn our bent backs on thee, and scratch and scabble  
In ash-heaps for salvation.<sup>2</sup>

He has withering scorn for the artificiality of  
much that is characteristic of modern life :

In the drawing-rooms I saw scarce one that seemed at  
ease ;

They were half-averted sad anxious faces, impossible  
pompous faces, drawling miowling faces, peaked faces  
well provided with blinkers,

And their owners kept standing first on one leg and  
then on the other.<sup>3</sup>

Not less so for the timidity, infidelity, un-  
reality, and lack of virility so manifest in the  
populations of towns and cities :

These populations—

So puny, white-faced, machine-made,

Turned out of factories, out of offices, out of drawing-  
rooms, by thousands all alike—

Huddled, stitched up, in clothes, fearing a chill, a  
drop of rain, looking timidly at the sea and sky as at  
strange monsters, or running back so quick to their  
suburban runs and burrows,

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 377.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 425.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139.

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Dapper, libidinous, cute, with washed-out small eyes—  
What are these ?

Are they men and women ?

Each denying himself, hiding himself ?

Are they men and women ?

So timorous, like hares—a breath of propriety or custom, a draught of wind, the mere threat of pain or of danger ? <sup>1</sup>

The humour and the (probably intentional) exaggeration of these passages soften the sting somewhat, but they are home-thrusts. When he speaks of some of the conditions of modern labour, however, he is at no pains to put the button on the foil :

Cross-legged in a low tailor's den, gasping for breath—

The gas flaring, doors and windows tight shut, the thick sick atmosphere ;

The men in their shirt-sleeves, with close heat from the stove, and smell of sweat and of the cloth ;

Stitching, stitching, twelve hours a day, no set time for meals—

Stitching, cross-stitching, button-holing, binding,  
Silk twist, cotton twist, black thread, white thread,  
Stouting, felling, pressing, damping,  
Basting, seaming, opening seams, rantering,  
With sore eyes, sick sick at heart, and furious,  
In a low tailor's den he sits.

All day in his mind—like a hunted criminal—he revolves ;

How shall I escape ?

How change this miserable pittance for Freedom, and yet not starve ? <sup>2</sup>

In such passages, which might easily be multi-

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 266.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 280



plied, Carpenter suggests the existence in modern society of great areas of unnatural life. It takes several forms, but the thing is patent enough in the factories and in the churches, in the suburban drawing-rooms and in the East End sweating-dens. He thinks that it is chiefly the cause of all the diseases, physical, mental, moral, from which modern society suffers (*vide* the scathing Zolaesque, "Surely the Time will come" <sup>1</sup>). How has this state of things come about? How may it be remedied? The former is the prior question, and happily can the more easily be answered. What causes have unhomed us in the world? The list is not exhaustive, but three such causes can be named.

It will scarcely be denied that the Church—the teachings and presuppositions of orthodox religion—has a good deal to answer for in this matter. It has taught us that the world is evil; a temptation-haunted house of probation; a devil's acre; something to be perpetually struggled with; a siren, so that to enjoy it is one of the great betrayals of the spiritual life. All natural things are evil, lie under the doom of a heavenly decree, and exist only to be annihilated by shock and fire. "We are but pilgrims here, Heaven is our home." Mortality is a kind of disease. Natural passions are sinister. We have been exhorted for long time to renounce this world, and to prepare for another one. The Church has set itself

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 388.

up as a kind of foreign embassy, in which the citizens of a heavenly kingdom may find refuge amid the threatening stresses of an enemy's land. With its appalling doctrine of original sin, with its disproportionate emphasis on human sinfulness, and by itself creating not a few sins and so haunting us, as children are haunted by the imaginary bogies of nursery-tales, the Church has done much to drive us out of Nature's garden, to hound us out of her bosom, and to make us aliens in one of the Many Mansions of the Father's House. The Church has attempted to wrench asunder the corporeal and the spiritual aspects of life, and by proclaiming a doctrine of Salvation (Health) which applies to one aspect of the life only (the Soul) has set up a false standard of holiness (Wholeness).

The second cause—not altogether unconnected with the first—may be referred to in a general way as the elaboration of social organization; society, acting under an unconscious instinct of self-preservation, covers itself with an armoury of scales (conventions, proprieties, and the like) against the threat of disturbance and disintegration from the natural spontaneous impulses of the individual. Up to a point this armament is necessary to the existence of society, and is not without its advantage to the most venturesome member thereof; but it may assume such proportions as to jeopardize the life of society itself. If the Order becomes so hidebound that pro-

gress—which is always in some sense a violation of the Order—becomes impossible, the Order must perish under the weight of its very defences.

Etiquette, form, fashion, custom, tradition, public opinion, codes of honour, rank, class-divisions, routine, virtues, Mrs. Grundy, so-called education—these are the self-protective devices of the *status quo* as against the individual ; they are all very well in their way, and up to a point ; in excess, they degenerate into the unhealthy and indecent fads and foibles of Respectability. Assuming an authority over the free spirit, which is not theirs by right ; imposed in self-defence by the brute-force of the herd through the medium of its bond-servants—the policeman, the law-court, the pulpit, the press ; becoming the idols and fetishes of drawing-room and market-place,—they grow into beetling and bristling barriers which effectively shut men out from air, scope, space, risk, danger, and all the things which make a healthy, independent, virile life possible.

If we may take but one example of the working of this power, could anything exceed the stupidity of the conventionalism which characterizes the respectable attitude towards that sacred, divinely-natural thing we call Sex ? The very mention of the word makes some people go hot and uncomfortable all over. What evil spirit has made this to happen so ? We are ashamed of our bodies. The very word “ flesh ” seems to have

a taint about it. Such a thing must not be mentioned in decent society. How impure much of our "decency" is! This unnatural secrecy; this evil policy of hush; this youth-ignorance and adult prudery; this repressive treatment meted out to a human passion which has within itself the potentiality of divine manhood and womanhood, until what should be a pure flame is smothered into a smoky smoulder, and what should be a sweet translucent river oozes into a noisome swamp—how wrong it is; yet how characteristic of that which arrogates to itself the function of the backbone and bulwark of society. Well may Carpenter write:

It is not unfair to suppose that this vulgar Philistinism is largely responsible for the sordid commercialism of the good people of the last century. Finding the lute and the lyre snatched from their hands, they were fain to turn to a greater activity with the muck-rake.<sup>1</sup>

These words introduce the third cause which tends to separate us from a natural life. If we call it baldly and bluntly Civilization, the reader must check a hasty judgment until the matter has been more fully dealt with in a subsequent chapter.<sup>2</sup> For the moment we may qualify the challenging word and say—that more materialistic tendency of civilization which is rooted in the institution of private property, issues in the triumph and tyranny of machinery, feeds the spirit of greed and cruelty in the not-too-human

<sup>1</sup> *The Drama of Love and Death*, p. 35.      <sup>2</sup> *Vide* Chapter XI.



heart, and has created (among other things) selfish landlordism, economic poverty, factories, the "tailor's den," unhappy labour, white slavery, the crowded tenement, food-adulteration—more than half the diseases and miseries which the best men in the world are now spending brains, time, money, and manifold energy to cope with and eradicate if possible. The mention of such typical modern social phenomena suggests the very antithesis to a "natural life."

If these, then, be the causes of our separation from Nature, what are the remedies? It may be said at once and frankly that Carpenter's main business is not with remedies, in the sense that the modern student of social problems understands them. To organize the details of a reform movement is not his *métier*. He is a revealer, rather than a reformer. He is a prophet rather than an organizer. He has a vision, not a formulated scheme. He is a pioneer; the builders of the railway which shall bring the world up to the point which he reached come after. He "opens a door" and shows us what shall be, displays the wider horizon; the construction of the common way thereto may be left to others.

In a vague, hinting way he asks for a revival of Paganism within the Christian ethic; for the simplification of life; for a more "natural" education of children; for a freer, broader, purer, more reverential treatment of the central social fact—Love; he would probably support a scheme for



Land Nationalization ; he has compiled a volume of Labour Chants most of which are revolutionary, and not a few anarchical, in spirit ; but he is no pedlar of remedies ; he is a dreamer, and he tells his dream.

O for a breath of the sea and the great mountains !

A bronzed hardy live man walking his way through it all ;

Thousands of men companioning the waves and the storms, splendid in health, naked-breasted, catching the lion with their hands ;

A thousand women swift-footed and free—owners of themselves, forgetful of themselves, in all their actions—full of joy and laughter and action ;

Garbed not so differently from the men, joining with them in their games and sports, sharing also their labours ;

Free to hold their own, to grant or withhold their love, the same as the men ;

Strong, well-equipped in muscle and skill, clear of finesse and affectation—

(The men, too, clear of much brutality and conceit)—

Comrades together, equal in intelligence and adventure,

Trusting without concealment, loving without shame, but with discrimination and continence towards a perfect passion.

O for a breath of the sea !

The necessity and directness of the great elements themselves !

Swimming the rivers, braving the sun, the cold, taming the animals and the earth, conquering the air with wings, and each other with love,—

The true, the human, society.<sup>1</sup>

The dream is an alluring one. Signs are not

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 267.

wanting that it is beginning to captivate the hearts of an increasing number of men and women ; the movement in this direction has already almost passed through the apparently necessary stage of being victimized by all kinds of cranks and faddists ; closer to Nature—partly in spite of garden cities and suburbs—is a real and vital modern tendency. This is enough for faith and hope. Capture the will, and a way will be found. Create the desire, and it will in its turn create the structure ; quicken, stimulate, reinforce the spirit, and organization will follow as surely and as faithfully as the tides follow the moon. When the love of a truer Ideal arises and grows strong, it brings with it in increasing measure a discontent with the present condition of things, and the adequate remedies, the necessary outlets, are sure to be found. Meanwhile, let us acknowledge and acclaim the man who witnesses to the Ideal, and helps us to love it.

One day, in a manufacturing town, with sulphurous atmosphere and smoke-blackened houses, Carpenter looked into the wistful child-face of a ragged boy who passed him in the crowd. In a flash

I saw it all clearly, the lie I saw and the truth, the false dream and the awakening.

For the smoke-blackened walls and the tall chimneys, and the dreary habitations of the poor, and the drearier habitations of the rich, crumbled and conveyed themselves away as if by magic ;

And instead, in the backward vista of that face, I saw  
the joy of free open life under the sun ;

The green sun-delighting earth and rolling sea I saw,

The free sufficing life—sweet comradeship, few needs  
and common pleasures—the needless endless burdens all  
cast aside,

Not as a sentimental vision, but as a fact and a necessity existing, I saw

In the backward vista of that face.

Stronger than all combinations of Capital, wiser than  
all the Committees representative of Labour, the simple  
need and hunger of the human heart.

Nothing more is needed.

All the books of political economy ever written, all the  
proved impossibilities, are of no account.

The smoke-blackened walls and tall chimneys duly  
crumble and convey themselves away ;

The falsehood of a gorged and satiated society curls  
and shrivels together like a withered leaf,

Before the forces which lie dormant in the pale and  
wistful face of a little child.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *T. D* , p. 145.

## CHAPTER V

### FREEDOM

"If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

#### ARGUMENT

*The desire for Freedom is the determining force in history, and the inner meaning of human striving. What is Freedom? Carpenter defines it in terms of the inner life, and his treatment has considerable affinity with that of Henri Bergson. It is an inward potentiality which is realized only when we act in such a way as to express and incarnate our Self as a whole. The movement to Freedom is inward, and is associated with a detachment from external objects; through this indifference we enter into mastery. To die to the more external Self is to find the more inward Self, union with which is realized as harmony and creative power. This disentanglement does not, as in Buddhism, look towards escape from the world, but towards mastery over it, and therefore enjoyment of it.*

*The finding and establishment of this inward centre are mediated through Experience, chiefly through the experiences of Pain, Love, and Moral Effort.*

IT is possible from one point of view to regard the individual, the narrower community in which he is first conscious of membership, and the wider organism of humanity, as three

concentric circles of successively increasing areas ; the common dynamic centre may be defined as the desire for freedom. It is the secret which lies behind and within all world-political movements. This is true alike of the nationalistic tendencies in the smaller, weaker, so-called inferior races, and of the aggressive, expansive policies of the dominant nations. The significance of Nationalism is self-expression ; the tenacity, stubbornness, unquenchableness of the spirit of Nationalism is not to be interpreted in terms of vulgar pride or of an over-estimated self-importance on the part of a people, but rather in terms of the indomitable urgency of a fundamental race-fact—the beginning and the end of each and every race—original, peculiar, necessary, eternal, whose fullest expression is required for the perfection of the world-economy. In similar terms, and not as mere greed and lust for empire, or the fascination of political intrigue, or the economic demand for an outlet for population, must we interpret the policies of aggression, conquest, imperialism, which characterize the movements of the greater (for the time being) nations in the world.

Not otherwise, or less so, is the case with the community itself regarded from within ; it seems as if nothing could speak peace to its stormy waves ; generation after generation, with alternating fortunes but with no real intermission, there proceeds the struggle of Order with Progress, Establishment with Anarchy, Tradition with



Heresy, Ascendancy with Subjection, Aristocracy with the Masses, Capitalism with Labour, Individualism with Socialism : the reason for this is not to be found, as the superficial observer might imagine, in the arrogance of the strong, the discontent of the weak, the selfishness of the possessor, the revenge of the dispossessed, the mere brute struggle of the Haves to retain and of the Have-nots to obtain ; it is an inward ferment which flings itself up into these various surface-oppositions. These outward antagonisms are, like those of lovers, the signs of a subtle inward co-operation ; they prepare the way for a higher unity. The whole secret of the ferment is the gradual arrival from within of a profounder community-consciousness. The community as a whole is coming to itself through the strife of its members. It is a potential Freedom issuing into actuality through stress.

For this the heroes and lovers of all ages have laid down their lives ; and nations like tigers have fought, knowing well that this life was a mere empty blob without Freedom.

Where this makes itself known in a people or even in the soul of a single man or woman, there Democracy begins to exist.<sup>1</sup>

And, without further elaboration, the same thing is true of the individual, whose heart is almost always the arena of a struggle ; he may not understand the agony, may think himself

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 10.

the victim of a pitiless, blind Life ; he may prolong it unduly by seeking delusive reliefs ; but the beginning of a wise and happy life dates from the moment when he perceives the truth and orientates himself duly towards it :

To realize Freedom,—for this hitherto, for you, the universe has rolled ; for this, your life, possibly yet many lives ; for this, death, many deaths ; for this, desires, fears, complications, bewilderments, sufferings, hope, regret,—all falling away at last duly before the Soul, before You (O laughter !) arising the full-grown lover—possessor of the password.<sup>1</sup>

In his teaching upon this point, Carpenter has the courage of his own experience, and boldly interprets the world in the light of it. Our knowledge of the way along which he was brought to the culminating experience of 1881 is, as yet, very scanty ; we await those more intimate autobiographical details which are his own secret ; but, should they be given, they would doubtless disclose—as indeed we are bound to infer from what hints we have—a prolonged period of struggle, outwardly as against the circumstances into which he was born and with which he was entangled before the movement to deeper self-awareness began, inwardly as against those physiological and mental processes which represent tradition, heredity, and all ancestral and racial predispositions in the individual. Probably enough, in the early stages of this *Sturm und*

<sup>1</sup> T. D., p. 9.

*Drang*, Carpenter did not understand its meaning or its drift; when, however, he glimpsed what the truth might be, he bore himself in respect of it with such fidelity and sincerity that the ultimate experience worked itself out and came through. He himself would perhaps resent the use of terms here which imply personal merit; like others before him "he could do no other." It is true of all such experiences that they are seeking us out as much and more than we are seeking them; in our eager quests for life, for the Ideal, for God, it is difficult to say which is the huntsman and which the quarry.

Be this as it may, the experience came through, the Master arrived, and Carpenter knew for himself the joy and peace and power which—if we may recall the figure of the previous chapter—is associated with consciousness in the second unity.<sup>1</sup> He believed that the secret of all the previous stress and tension was hereby placed in his hands. Then, taking ground upon this one empiric fact, and with a faith comparable with that which legend—the legend which is often truer than history,—attributes to Newton, he passed to a generalization which has something of the breadth, and may prove to have something of the importance also, of the Law of Gravitation itself; he asserted his own experience as the

<sup>1</sup> The reader must bear in mind that the three unities do not represent three different qualities of consciousness, but the same consciousness in three different relations or settings.

real norm of human experience—namely, that all world wayfare and warfare signifies the arrival of a new quality of consciousness, profounder, wider, potential with invulnerable peace and insuperable joy ; and this, from within the presently torn, bleeding, often weary and heavy-laden human heart.

The daily life of each man and woman, the ever-expected Morrow, the endless self-seeking, the illusive quests (faint not, O faint not!), the bog-floundering after fatuous wisps, the tears, disappointments, and obstinate renewals of hope—

All routes and roads and the myriad moving of feet to and fro over the earth,—

What are they but Transparencies of one great fact—symbols of the innumerable paths

By which the soul returns to Paradise ? <sup>1</sup>

It is in terms of this inner ascending consciousness that Carpenter defines Freedom.

I heard the long roar and surge of History, wave after wave—as of the never-ending surf along the immense coast-line of West Africa.

I heard the world-old cry of the down-trodden and outcast ; I saw them advancing always to victory.

I saw the red light from the guns of established order and precedent—the lines of defence and the bodies of the besiegers rolling in dust and blood—yet more and ever more behind !

And high over the inmost citadel I saw magnificent, and beckoning ever to the besiegers, and the defenders ever inspiring, the cause of all that never-ending war—

The form of Freedom stand.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 238.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 238.



The kingdom of liberty, then, is first an inward kingdom, though like every other inward vital thing it tends to express itself in structure and organization. To be free is not to escape limitations, but rather to find oneself. Freedom is a spiritual, personal fact : it is the ascent of the deeper consciousness, the more inward Self, which, as it arises, announces itself as the higher necessity, whose "service is perfect freedom." It is the latent union of the One with the Many become conscious, active, dynamic.

It is interesting to observe—and will help us to give to Carpenter's mind its due rank—how similar this doctrine of freedom is to that propounded by Henri Bergson. The deeper we descend into the profundities of our personal being, the less are we able to express what we find there as a sequence of separate and successive ideas, feelings, efforts, and states of consciousness generally ; the more do we experience the self-life as one whole, indivisible thing like a flowing tide in which the successive waves run into each other and lose all distinction in one interpenetrated whole. In its true nature, our self-reality (to quote a brilliant expositor of the "new philosophy," M. Édouard le Roy) appears as

an uninterrupted flow, an impalpable shiver of fluid changing tones, a perpetual flux of waves which ebb and break and dissolve into one another without shock or jar.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Le Roy, *A New Philosophy*, p. 77.



## 100 BERGSON'S THEORY OF FREEDOM

In these depths

we have no series of moments, but prolonged and interpenetrating phases ; their sequence is not a substitution of one point for another, but rather resembles a musical resolution of harmony into harmony.<sup>1</sup>

Bergson has pointed out that the reason why all previous arguments propounded to demonstrate the Freedom of the Will have failed is because the problem has been so stated as to refer only to the superficial externalized aspect of the self-life, the life as it is expressed in discrete and separate words and deeds. Freedom has been sought in this superficial life, our usual commonplace life, the life which, perhaps, for most men is the only one of which they are aware ; and freedom has not been demonstrated here, for the simple reason that it is not here, since it is in the very nature of this life at the circumference of the self that it is split up into fragmentary elements which are determined by the world-environment at every point. Determinism consorts closely with self-consciousness. Freedom belongs to the centre, not to the circumference. Freedom lies where the personal life moves and expresses itself as a whole.

Freewill is the very nature of our lives as individual wholes, the expression of the individuality of life.<sup>2</sup>

To quote Bergson's own words :

We are free when our acts proceed from our entire

<sup>1</sup> Le Roy, *A New Philosophy*, p. 81.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Wildon Carr, *Bergson*. Cf. Le Roy, pp. 82-8.

personality, when they express it, when they exhibit that indefinable resemblance to it which we find occasionally between the artist and his work.<sup>1</sup>

The illustration suggested by the last sentence will repay a moment's reflection. An artist has his more superficial life like the rest of men, the life of ordinary intercourse with the world and his fellows; freedom does not lie here. In a good deal, maybe, of his work he is not free; that is to say, he imitates some master, or synthesizes the ideas of some school, or does less self-expressive work to earn a living, or subserves the fashion and the taste of the time. Obviously there is no freedom here. But meanwhile something is growing up within him; it is a profound inward movement of which only himself is aware; it is the expansion and progress of his soul; it is the development of his individuality. To begin with it may be vague and undefined; an obscure deep motion; a faintly-marked point of view, of feeble intensity. But with the passage of time it gathers strength. From all the manifold experience of life something enters into and becomes a part of this growing spiritual selfhood. It becomes more and more urgent. Its momentum and pressure increase. He comes to be in travail with it. It swells like a fertilized seed. It rises like a tide. He experiments; his experiments are failures, yet they count. The thing comes on in him, it lifts itself up like a wave. His whole being is

<sup>1</sup> Bergson, *Immediate Data of Consciousness*, p. 131.

gathered into it. He knows that it is the reality of himself. At last it is ripe ; at last he can express himself, triumphantly transcending his materials ; he creates a new thing.

That, in Bergson's view, is his free act. Such self-announcements, such self-incarnations, are the only free acts. "Freewill is creative action." Freedom attaches to the spiritual life. It is our constant potential as spiritual beings, but only rarely does it become actual.

That our spiritual life is genuine action, capable of independence, initiative, and irreducible novelty, not mere result produced from outside ; that it is so much ours as to constitute every moment, for him who can see, an essentially incomparable and new invention, is exactly what represents for us the name of liberty. Understood thus, liberty is a profound thing ; we seek it only in those moments of high and solemn choice which come into our life, not in the petty familiar actions which their very insignificance submits to all surrounding influences, to every wandering breeze. Liberty is rare ; many live and die and have never known it. Liberty is a thing which contains an infinite number of degrees and shades ; it is measured by our capacity for the inner life. Liberty is a thing which goes on in us unceasingly ; our liberty is potential rather than actual. The free act is the act which has long been preparing, the act which is heavy with our whole history, and falls like a ripe fruit from our past life.<sup>1</sup>

Stated from a slightly different angle, this is precisely Carpenter's doctrine. Freedom is consciousness in the second unity, the inward sense

<sup>1</sup> Le Roy, p. 84.

of oneness with the whole spiritual organism of humanity which is (potentially) present in and to each individual; it is the unity of the Self quickened and realized at the deeper centre. "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Freewill is this consciousness moving unimpaired to action; all such actions are creative, and are characterized by an unusual experience of rest, satisfaction, joy, ability.

It is inevitable that so fundamental a conception should appear in many guises; at one time Carpenter describes it as "measureless space in the soul" <sup>1</sup>; at another, as the fulfilled immortal life in the heart <sup>2</sup>; or "the cosmic vast emancipated life" <sup>3</sup>; or, emphasizing its creative aspect, "the precious semen of Democracy." <sup>4</sup> He equates it with happiness. <sup>5</sup> It has its feet upon the earth, and its brow among the stars. It is the ground of self-reliance, and also of that gentleness which makes us great. In fine, it is the Truth that is in us, and to know that Truth, not as a theory but in experience, is to be free.

Closely associated with Freedom in Carpenter's thought are the ideas of indifference, withdrawal, disentanglement, abandonment, letting go, dying to self. This is an important aspect of the subject, and a brief examination of it will clarify still further the idea of Freedom. Self-withdrawal is, of course, a somewhat negative expres-

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 179.      <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 184.      <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 442.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 442.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 326.



sion for the deepening of consciousness, the descent of the Self from the apex of intense individuality and the surfaces of separation into the underlying unities. It is the same movement. "Ever leaving go of the surfaces of objects, and so taking the heart of them with us; this is the law."<sup>1</sup> Our ordinary experience bears witness to this as the one practical method of real possession. To enter into possession of anything is to become gradually independent of it; we only possess that which we do not want; so long as we cannot do without a thing, it possesses us. To possess one's self is to possess all things. So, for example, in respect of the body:

Remember that if you walk away from it and leave it behind, it will have to follow you—it will grow by following, by continually reaching up to you. . . .

Therefore quite lightly and decisively at each turning-point in the path leave your body a little behind—

With its hungers and sleeps, and funny little needs and vanities—paying no attention to them;

Slipping out at least a few steps in advance, till it catch you up again,

Absolutely determined not to be finally bound or weighted down by it.<sup>2</sup>

Similarly with the Mind:

Therefore quite decisively, day by day and at every juncture, leave your Mind for a time in silence and abeyance;

With its tyrannous thoughts and demands, and funny little fears and fancies—the long legacy of ages of animal evolution;

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 502.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 484.



Slipping out and going your own way into the Unseen—feeling with your feet if necessary through the darkness—till some day it may follow you ;

Absolutely determined not to be bound by any of its conclusions ; or fossilized in any pattern that it may invent,

For this were to give up your kingdom, and bow down your neck to Death.<sup>1</sup>

So with all external things, objects of desire, sweet good and beautiful as they may be, “ as a fly cleans its legs of the honey in which it has been caught,” we must be free of them all—even of Love itself :

Therefore, if thou wouldst love, withdraw thyself from love ;

Make it thy slave, and all the miracles of nature shall lie in the palm of thy hand.<sup>2</sup>

The issue of such a practice is not that we may become free *from* all these things, and never have anything to do with them again ; rather that we may be free *of* them—as a master-worker is free of his tools—and so really possess them for both use and enjoyment.

This habit of withdrawal and detachment is the practical side of the deepening of the life-centre, and proceeds *pari passu* with it. It is the old paradox of losing life that we may find it. That which we let go and leave behind is not lost. It is as when a man sits on a spur of the foothills and enjoys the scene which is spread out before

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 486.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 345.

him ; the horizon is narrow enough, but the landscape is homely and intimate, so fair in its details of stream and meadow and coppice and homestead, and so captivating that he were well content to remain there, and cannot think that anything could be more desirable. Then comes the strange mystical desire—native to the human heart—to climb. He rises, turns his back upon that dear and gentle beauty, and begins the ascent ; he lets it go ; quite literally, it seems to drop away from him ; in a few moments it is lost to sight and sound ; but when the new resting-place in the height is attained he finds to his delight that all that he seemed to lose is given back to him, and in grander perspective, mightier setting.

So it is with that process commonly spoken of as the Death to Self ; the self to which we are to die is the narrow delusive self, the self of which we are aware in opposition to the not-self, the self which is constantly in friction and entanglement with the external world ; this is the self we are to sacrifice and renounce ; and, as is now clearly seen, in the interests of the true Self, the whole Self. The true Self is not other than the delusive superficial self, as if to gain the first were to lose the second ; all that we lose is the delusiveness and the perpetual undignified determination by outward circumstance ; the view from the higher point includes all the views from the lower points ; the higher happiness includes,

not excludes, all the other delights; true freedom embraces the lower kingdoms; the soul's attainment of freedom gives us for the first time the true possession of our bodies, so that we renew our youth, and experience the old passions not now as tyrants but as ministers.

"I conceive," says Carpenter—

I conceive a millennium on earth—a millennium not of riches, nor of mechanical facilities, nor of intellectual facilities, nor absolutely of immunity from disease, nor absolutely of immunity from pain; but a time when men and women all over the earth shall ascend and enter into relation with their bodies—shall attain freedom and joy.<sup>1</sup>

There must be no half-measures about this practice of withdrawal. This probably is the cause of so much of the ineffectiveness and disappointment which fill the lives even of those who know and acknowledge the way—they do not go the whole way. The complete sacrifice will give joy, but the half-sacrifice never; and many there are who keep their hand upon the gift even when they have laid it on the altar. The complete abandonment will give liberty, but the policy of half-abandonment fixes a man in that desperate half-way house between slavery and freedom, which is like the place of the breakers lying between the mud-bank where he can at least stick and the open sea where he can swim. With grim humour, Carpenter inscribes over the

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 5.

portals of mortal life the legend "Abandon hope, all ye that enter here" !

To die—for this into the world you came.

Yes, to abandon more than you ever conceived as possible ;

All ideals, plans—even the very best and most unselfish—all hopes and desires,

All formulas of morality, all reputation for virtue or consistency or good sense ; all cherished theories, doctrines, systems of knowledge,

Modes of life, habits, predilections, preferences, superiorities, weaknesses, indulgences,

Good health, wholeness of limb and brain, youth, manhood, age—nay life itself—in one word : To die,—

For this into the world you came.

All to be abandoned, and when they have been finally abandoned,

Then to return to be used—and then only to be rightly used, to be free and open for ever.<sup>1</sup>

This habit of abandonment he calls the Path of Indifference. It is a characteristic thought, and finds its fullest expression in that very wise and entirely convincing poem entitled "Have Faith."

The sportsman does not say, I will start a hare at the corner of this field, or I will shoot a turkey-buzzard at the foot of that tree ;

But he stands indifferent and waits on emergency, and so makes himself master of it.<sup>2</sup>

Such Indifference is as far removed from *laissez-faire* on the one hand as it is from anxiety on the

<sup>1</sup> T. D., p. 353.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 172.

other. Its essence is self-poise and readiness for whatever may come. Life is full of manifold experience; the value of experience, as we shall see in the next chapter, is not in what it gives, rather in what it elicits in the soul; we may be sure that all the experience which is necessary for the full blossoming of the soul will arrive to it in due time, but we cannot determine either the order or the time of any particular experience; we must be ready for each, as it arrives; and to the prepared, self-possessed man every experience mediates good. There is, therefore, no need to hurry; all that we require is Faith—that is to say, patience combined with sure expectation that “all is provided for,” and all is well. Haste and exhaustion characterize the superficial life, and the more a man or a community is entangled in it—a conspicuous modern phenomenon—the higher the velocity and the deeper the weariness; but the tempo of real life is always leisurely.

Absolve yourself to-day from the bonds of action <sup>1</sup>;

which does not mean “do not act,” but “do not be over-concerned about any action, or the opportunity for it.” The soul must come to the Whole, and the Whole into the soul.

Wait, wait ever for the coming of the Lord. See that you are ready for his arrival.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 174.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 174.



Besides, life in each moment is good to the man of simple needs and inward balance ; and full of promise, also, since the bigger life is always near and here, and will enter in by unexpected ways at the slightest opportunity. Let him habituate himself to calmness and readiness.

Is your present experience hard to bear ?

Yet remember that never again in all your days will you have another chance of the same.

Do not fly the lesson, but have a care that you master it while you have the opportunity.<sup>1</sup>

Fretting and anxious concern are as undignified as they are futile ; there is no greater enemy of good work than a painful nervous eagerness to do it, unless it be the desire to do it just because it is reckoned good.

As long as you harbour motives, so long are you giving hostages to the enemy ; while you are a slave to this and that you can only obey. It is not You who are acting at all.

Brush it all aside. Pass disembodied out of yourself.

Enter into the life which is eternal, pass through the gate of Indifference into the palace of Mastery ;

Give away all that you have, become poor and without possessions—and behold ! you shall be lord and sovereign of all things.<sup>2</sup>

The pathway to Freedom, then, is one which leads inward towards the deeper regions of the self-life ; it involves withdrawal from circumference fretting and friction, disentanglement

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 176.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 178.

from desire ; it results not in the leaving behind of anything, for all things will then follow you and acknowledge your masterhood. This on the practical side. On the mystical side, the end of the pathway is union with one's self, inward harmony, the effective realization of the wholeness of personality, and an extraordinary sense of power with men, since the centre is now fixed in that wherein all " live and move and have their being."

Him who is not detained by mortal adhesions, who walks in this world yet not of it,

Taking part in everything with equal mind, with free limbs and senses unentangled—

Giving all, accepting all, using all, enjoying all, asking nothing, shocked at nothing—

Whom love follows everywhere, but he follows not it,—

Him all creatures worship, all men and women bless.<sup>1</sup>

This man is the true Son of God. He is the Master. He is a Creator also, having found his way to the " heart of all lovers." For

When what you will, you will with the whole force of your nature, undivided—

Undivided by fear, conscience, conventions, and the distinctions of self and not-self ;

Then lo ! all that you wish—all that your heart forms for an image of its longings—shall take shape before you ;

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 344.

You shall create the things which are the fulfilment of your needs ;

There is nothing that shall not be yours.<sup>1</sup>

Much that has been said in this chapter has obvious affinities with Buddhism ; and Carpenter is considerably indebted to Eastern thought, and has much sympathy with the general outlook of the Eastern mind ; yet the distinguishing features are, we hope, equally obvious. Carpenter is undoubtedly one of the leaders among those who are making possible that synthesis between East and West in which lies the future, and the hope, both of philosophy and religion. His attitude, however, towards life, in contrast with the Buddhistic, is essentially positive, not negative ; active, not quiescent ; optimist, not pessimist. He does not seek a deliverance out of life, but rather a fuller deliverance into it ; he does not disentangle himself from objects of desire that he may escape them, rather that he may use and enjoy them with dignity and mastery ; he would only get free from the wheel of life, that he may become the charioteer in the car ; and would bring his world-thirsts to an end, only in having found the inward fountain of living waters, " whereof, if a man drink, he shall not thirst again."

We have now to consider in what ways this deeper consciousness, realizable as freedom and mastery, and, according to Carpenter's central

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 497.

hypothesis, existing potentially in every individual, may be mediated. In one word, the answer is, Experience ; but there are three kinds of experience which appear to have an especially valuable function in the deliverance of this inner life—Pain, Love, and the Moral Life. These will be the subjects of the next four chapters.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE VALUE OF ALL EXPERIENCE

"I go to prove my soul!  
I see my way as birds their trackless way,  
I shall arrive. What time, what circuit first,  
I ask not. . . .  
In some time, His good time, I shall arrive;  
He guides me and the bird.

. . . . .  
I press God's lamp  
Close to my breast; its splendour, soon or late,  
Will pierce the gloom; I shall emerge one day."

BROWNING

#### ARGUMENT

*The answer to the question "Why does this happen to me?" depends on two prior questions—"Who am I?" and "What precisely is happening to me?" The first question has been already answered. The second is answered by saying that the crux of every experience is in the experient; experience does not mould the man, but rather elicits the soul. The reaction to experience is the important thing; every kind of experience may be necessary to educe the latencies of the soul, and all experience counts. The poem "After Long Ages" is an account of the Soul climbing the heights of experience to Paradise. Experience works by per-*



*colation and by attrition, constantly adding something to the soul, and constantly wearing thinner the dividing membrane of separated individuality ; after long experience, therefore, throughout an eager and faithful life, the slightest thing may become the occasion of the soul's deliverance into vision and power.*

ONE of the most poignant of human cries is the question, " Why does this happen to me ? " Sometimes it issues out of the heart of a withering sorrow, sometimes out of a bewildering joy—Who am I that my Lord cometh unto me ?

The problem is only intensified by the reflective ejaculations, " I did not seek it," " I do not deserve it," " It is not my fault " ; and is so obstinate that many despair of finding an answer save in some such theory as that of Reincarnation coupled with the Buddhist conception of Karma—a solution which, as so often happens, is simply the substitution of one problem for another. This offered solution, however, points in the right direction, since it suggests that this mortal, threescore-years-and-ten life is not self-contained, and can only yield its secrets when placed in a wider context.

It is a *human* cry, the cry of a self-conscious being. We cannot conceive of its being uttered by an animal, even by a domesticated animal with some claim to incipient intelligence. A bee does not ask such a question when it awakes one

morning to find almost all its treasured store of honey taken from the hive ; nor a water-rat when its nest is flooded, and its young destroyed, by some sudden rise in the river ; nor a spider when your hand, as you pass, utterly ruins its web ; nor the pig finding itself in clover ; nor even the dog leaping to the unexpected, and indeed untimely, bone. Such incidents at these, which are common enough in the lives of the lowlier creatures, are on all fours with the accidents, surprises, and disasters which form part of the normal circumstance of human life ; but we cannot imagine them asking, " Why does this happen to me ? " It takes a human to make a complaint. One of the symbols in the hall-mark of humanity is a note of interrogation. The faculty of wonder is a human faculty ; and although the right to complain may exist lower down in the creational scale, the ability to complain issues first in man.

Any satisfactory answer to our question depends upon two prior questions ; it cannot be answered before them ; and when they are answered, the complaint ceases almost automatically. The first of these two prior questions is, " Who am I ? " and the second, " What precisely is happening to me ? "

With the former, we have already dealt at some length. The plane on which Self-consciousness arises is the plane on which there is distinction and a certain amount of opposition between Self and not-Self. My first knowledge of my

Self is accompanied by, and to a large extent mediated through, the sense of an external world which is apparently quite different and separate from Me. Thought arises in this opposition and interplay between Subject and Object. It is the fundamental datum of our ordinary life: we divide the universe into two parts,—on the one hand there is Me, and on the other there is—all the rest. This distinction, which does not always exist—infants, for example, and animals do not make it—tends to intensify and harden. The ultimate result is that we come to regard the external world as something very set, fixed, intractable, threatening, pitiless; something placed over against us, lavish at times with its delights, but containing always the possibility of bruise and breakage to us. It is something we can arraign, and have a grudge against.

Similarly, and under the dominance of the same type of consciousness, men have come to regard God as an external Being whose favour seems to need continually to be sought, and held precariously enough by means of gifts and worship. There is a terrible figure lying behind a passage in the Book of Job; it is God with a Magnifying Glass.

What is man, that Thou shouldest magnify him?  
And that Thou shouldest visit him every morning, and  
try him every moment? How long wilt Thou not depart  
from me, nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle? <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Job vii. 17.

It is as if God were on His knees among the grasses of Time, singling out with a magnifying glass some insect for close observation, watching his every movement, putting obstacles in his way ever and anon to see how he will act, and, if He so please, amusing Himself by perplexing and teasing him.<sup>1</sup>

It is because some such view as this is held—of our Selves as being isolated, cut off, separated, alien, in the midst of the Universe—that the problem of evil is so stubborn. As a matter of fact, the teachings of modern science and philosophy, with theology coming up somewhat tardily behind them, converge upon the conclusion that the individual Self is not separate in this fashion; that we do not stand upon our private and peculiar points of individuality, like the oriental elephant upon the tortoise which itself stands upon nothing; that we are united in one common continuum, or Ocean, of life with all that has been made, and with all that is; that we are members in the living organism of Nature, and that the Universal Life, or (in religious terms) God, dwells in each of us.

As soon as we come to the point of view that we are not isolated from, but are living parts of and in, the great stream of Life ever-flowing, ever-proceeding; that the Universe is not alien from us, but that we are organically related with it; that God is not Some One set over against us,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Browning's "Caliban."

but is the core and secret of our personalities,—the question “Why does this happen to me?” assumes altogether a different aspect. For when it is asked by the ordinary man (suffering let us say from some mischance), it implies that something vast and virulent is “up against him,” that something, or Some One, is seeking him out to destroy him; as if there were two lives in the world—his own, and another which is hostile, alien, and the negative of his own. But if, escaping the dominance of this consciousness of separateness, he could reach only tentatively to the belief that this is not the case; that he is part of and wholly within the only Life that is, that he somehow is *it* manifesting in a particular way; that, therefore, all that happens to him happens, not in a world in which there are two sides set over against each other with a gulf fixed between, but in one undivided and deeply harmonious Whole,—he would approach that point of vision, occupied by the chosen few, wherefrom it is seen that “all is well,” and would therefore accept whatever experience came to him, knowing that when once assimilated it would prove to be good.

The wheel turns, but whatever it brings uppermost is well.<sup>1</sup>

Have faith. If that which rules the universe were alien to your soul, then nothing could mend your state—there were nothing left but to fold your hands and be damned everlastingly.

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 68!



But since it is not so—why, what can you wish for more?—all things are given into your hands.<sup>1</sup>

In a lower, cruder form this is the situation in which the animals find themselves. They live a general, rather than a particular, life; they do not differentiate themselves from the Whole, and so they accept whatever comes and make the best of themselves and of it; the plundered beehive gathers a new store; the spider spins another web; the pig munches the clover, but would do his best with a thistle-patch.

It is not for us to go back again to the level of the “dear beasts”; but it seems likely that, in that eternal spiral Life pursues, the destiny of a soul is, after having learned the lessons of an intensely individualized and self-conscious existence, with its oppositions, fears, and doubts, to arrive at the higher point of conscious union with the All-life—the point from which in the beginning, it was said, the Creator looked out upon all that He had made, and “behold! it was very good.”

We may now put the second of our questions: “What precisely is happening to me in any experience which I call mine?” The crux of every experience is in the experient. From his side, every experience involves a deed. He may rebel against it, seek to escape it, or he may receive it joyously, or he may be quiescent under it; even

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 173.

this last, however, requires an effort, and all effort assists development. The central fact of any experience is not expressed by saying, "Something is there, impressing me"; but rather, "I am reacting to it." All experience mediates the growth of the soul. In all experience, that which is happening within you is the real and important thing.

Browning's familiar figure of the potter is inadequate :

He fixed thee in this dance  
Of plastic circumstance,  
This Present thou, forsooth, wouldst fain arrest;  
Machinery just meant  
To give thy soul its bent,  
Try thee, and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed.

It is by no means all the truth to say that experience moulds us. We all feel the pressure of the hand of Experience, but the sense of pressure arises from two opposing strains; there is always the pressure from within outwards, as well as the pressure from without inwards. It is the reaction of the soul to Experience which gives "shape" and "character" to it. We should never experience the "pull" of temptation, unless there were inwardly a "pull" in the opposite direction. That which makes us conscious of any resistance is that there is, at that point, an outward push and thrust of the soul. We are placed in a world which is full of "hazards

and hardships" <sup>1</sup>; it passes the wit of man to account for their being there; it is futile to imagine that they are being manipulated, in respect of each individual, by an over-watching, scrutinizing God, either to test or to tease us; equally futile to try to conceive better possible, imaginary worlds; the critical fact is that there is in human persons an inherent faculty of reacting to experience of every kind, and of growing, developing, realizing soul-potential thereby. It is an ancient word,

Because thou hast made the Most High thy habitation,  
there shall no evil befall thee.

This does not mean that a good many sinister and unwelcome things shall not happen to thee at the life-circumference—where "things" do happen—but because thou hast found and fixed thy true life-centre, thou shalt find the right reactions even to them, and apparent evil shall minister growth and "more life"—that is, good.

The value of experience is in what it elicits within the soul; and the secret of lifewardness is to find the right reaction to experience. This secret is disclosed to the man who realizes his true identity with the Whole; it is he who "knows the right place by the foot's feel, takes it, and treads firm there."

Probably most of us to begin with find the wrong reactions. For example, to seek always

<sup>1</sup> Bosanquet in *The Meaning and Value of the Individual*.

to escape any particular kind of experience is obviously wrong ; for the " seeking to escape " is itself experience, and all we do is to substitute a negative for a positive. To rebel against an experience, to fight it, to keep it at arm's length, is not only exhausting, but is a refusal of intimate knowledge, and leaves the experience still to come, like the lawyer's man who has not delivered the writ ; it prolongs the period of tutelage. The instinct of the creative life—as seen, for example, in the Artist—is to enter into all experience, and, under self-mastery, under the magic of what Maeterlinck has spoken of as the legend written on the threshold, to welcome all experience.

We answer our second question, therefore, by saying that what is really happening in experience is that some potentiality of the soul, some latent power, is being realized. It would seem, then, that, if the soul's true Identity is the Great Self of all things, and if its destiny is the realization of this Selfhood in fulness, then every kind of experience may be necessary.

It is our custom to divide experiences, in a general way, into good and bad, and a traditional pedagogy teaches us to avoid the one and seek the other ; but, if the crux of any experience is in the soul's reaction to it, there will be great difficulty in definitely apportioning every experience to one or other of these two classes. In a poem entitled " Nothing Less than All," <sup>1</sup> Car-

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 487.



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penter, with characteristic humour and detachment, gives expression to this difficulty.

Ever men say : Here lies the truth, There lies the truth. Take this, cast that aside. Throw in thy lot with us. We are the wise, the rest are fools.

I go with these wise folk a little way, and then I draw back again ; I throw in my lot with them, and then, alas ! I throw in with the fools.

I cannot for the life of me answer the questions that are continually being asked.

Is it for pleasure and the world and the present, or for death and translation and spirituality, that we must live ? Is it for asceticism and control, or for ingenuity and sweet enjoyment ?

Is it best to be an idler or a worker, an accepted person or a criminal ?

Which is the most desirable or useful trade—to be a potter or a moulder or a parson or a prostitute or a town-councillor ?

Is it better to be surly and rude, or sympathetic and suave, to be quick-tempered or patient, cute or simple, moral or immoral ?

To join the society for the suppression of Vice, or to be one of the persons to be suppress ?

For the life of me I cannot answer all these questions ; I acknowledge that I am a fool. . . .

Till I think of the Present and the work I have actually to do—and then comes relief.

For the moment I am pledged to this or that ;

Yet I feel that in the end I must accept all,

And shall be content with nothing less than all.

And in another place he asks of a would-be saviour this critical question, “ Could you be yourself one of the lost ? ” <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 180



Before we can be "even as the gods," we must partake of the fulness of the knowledge both of "good" and of "evil." All experience is necessary; and since this is so, it will be provided for in the nature of things. It may require the "other heights (and depths) in other lives," but we may be sure that all we need awaits us. It is seeking us out in its own time; there is no need to hurry here and there, seeking many different experiments in experience; but we must not fail to keep our appointment with the experience that is at hand. All experience counts. It is the pathway to Paradise; or, more explicitly, it is the way by which the lover with "awful footsteps" advances in the "great secret caverns"<sup>1</sup> of the heart. This mysterious figure haunts the stanzas of that fine poem "After Long Ages." Under the names of "the Stranger," or "the Prince of Love," or "the Master," Carpenter refers to the Soul which gradually comes to itself amid the manifold experience—the uses and the calls—of mortal wayfaring. Something lies deep enfolded which, in due time, shall appear. The world-heart, and the man-heart, are alike pregnant with this hope.

In the house a Stranger waits for the children; he stands by in the dark and leans over them and watches their faces, as they watch the dancing blue flame;

He moves along the roads unseen, and waits in the great city, and in the woods at early dawn he waits.

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 218.

None but the woodman and he see the thin waned moon arising with stars in pale and silent beauty before the sun.

Sweet are the uses of Life.

The Stranger glides to and fro ; hours and centuries and thousand-year stretches he waits.

Among the children of mankind he waits. . . . He is a king, a poet, a soldier, a priest, a fig-pricker, a pariah.

It is indifferent ; he sees all and passes with all. . . .

He sees the down-trodden and outcast ; he sees the selfish and tyrannical—he looks them right in the face, but they do not see him ;

He sees the patient and heroic ; but he utters no word either of praise or blame.<sup>1</sup>

He is secure of his arrival ; all things lead on to his advent.

What he desires, what he alone dreams of, that all mortal things through all time and space never-ceasingly occupy themselves to perform.<sup>2</sup>

The simplest things, and the greatest things, help :

The primrose on the tree-root calls, love calls glancing from eyes of depth unfathomed.<sup>3</sup>

He may tarry long in the ante-chambers, "lost in strange mazes, wandering—in sin and sorrow, lonely despised and fallen"<sup>4</sup>—but Cinderella shall at last be wedded to the Prince of Heaven. Love "sees her once and rests no more till he has rescued and redeemed her."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 223.      <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 224.      <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 227.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 228.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 230.

Paradise is "where the Master is,"<sup>1</sup> and, as Augustine, working with a different formula, knew, "my heart is pained, nor can it be at rest till it find rest in Thee." The ante-chambers of the body, of the intellect, of art and morality, are important; the footsteps of the Master may be heard there, his footprints seen; but all these must be passed through if He is to be met face to face.

I do not turn you back from self-seeking; on the contrary, I know that you shall never rest till you have found your Self;

If you seek it in money, fame, and the idle gratification of inordinate organs and bumps—that is all very well for a time; but you will have to do better than that.

If you seek it in Duty, Goodness, Renunciation, they also are very well for a time; but you will do better.<sup>2</sup>

Man's birth is a descent and an infolding; he awakes to mortality and moves to and fro over the world among appearances—

Forgetful of his true self, he becomes a self-seeker among shadows<sup>3</sup>;

nothing results but war and conflict, disgust and disappointment; so he begins the return journey, and is alike urged and sustained therein by something which Plato would perhaps have called Reminiscence, but which is the witness of that imprisoned Splendour which is his true Self. What are the dreams of the Better Land, the quests

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 233.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 234.

for the Earthly Paradise, Utopia, Eldorado, the fabled Islands, the Sangreal, the Elixir of Life ; what signify the mystic scroll of the Zodiac, the Ark, the Host, the Holy of Holies, the Gospels of all lands, the proclamations of the resurrection of Christ, of Osiris, of the rest ; but the human reading of the vast and vague hieroglyph which the Great Self within the soul casts by its own light upon the curtain of self-consciousness ? <sup>1</sup>

These and all such things are not mere inventions of the pious visionary, nor delusive mirages which torment the overwrought mind of the traveller ; they are the projection on to the clouds of the future of that which is alone Real and Substantial, and is secreted within the heart of the individual and of the race ; our apparent horizontal approach to them, all that we may rightly speak of as human progress, is the outward showing of what is taking place deep in the heart—the becoming of That which is, the advance of the Lover, the arrival of the Master.

Where the Master is, there is Paradise ;  
And this world is Paradise.<sup>2</sup>

This is the core of the “ ancient indestructible Gospel ” ; we have far to go, there must still (with few breathing-spaces) be stress, passion, the dashing against the barriers of self, the endless contest, the melancholy haughty Titanic and lonely struggle of the soul,<sup>3</sup> the problems, the

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 237.      <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 236.      <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 252.

retracing of steps, the continual dealing with experience of all kinds ; we are out on this road ; and

There is no bar. The paths are all open, the signposts few—each must find the clue for himself, the exit from the labyrinth<sup>1</sup> ;

but the deliverance is sure ; “ in some time, His good time, I shall arrive ” ; for we are not finding something, so much as Something is finding us ; the “ beginning and the end of all things shall be with us.”<sup>2</sup>

O come with me, my soul—follow the inevitable call, follow the call of the great sky overarching you.

Disentangling the cobwebs of all custom and supposed necessity—the ancient cocoon in which humanity has lain so long concealed—

Pass forth, Thou, into the serene light ; along the hills, by the clumps of overhanging trees, through the doorways of all mortal life, pass thou redeemed, enfranchised.<sup>3</sup>

All experience counts. Nothing can come wrong to the soul that reacts rightly. So far we have spoken of experience as that which elicits the soul, the circumstant resistance against which latencies of power and beauty are developed until the soul attains its true Identity. Changing the figure somewhat, experience may be regarded as adding perpetually to that inward pool wherein, when it shall be full-grown, the man will see

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 256.      <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96.      <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 257.



himself reflected in the pure "mirror of God" and be satisfied. Or, more dynamically, like the rain which percolates through soil and rocks into the subterranean reservoir until it overflows, experience may be regarded as constantly "swelling the man's amount" until, like the breaking forth of a fountain, a new quality of life manifests from within. Or, from still another point of view, experience may be regarded as working by a process of attrition which gradually wears down the barrier, or rubs the mortal envelope, the surface membrane of self-consciousness, the film of separated individuality, thinner and thinner, and so brings us on to the "ecstatic deliverance, the bursting of the sac." <sup>1</sup>

Under whichever of these figures we view its operation, it would seem that in one, whose life has been rich in experience and who has reacted to it with wisdom, the Holy Thing should be ready to be born; the kingdom should be close at hand. Almost anything may deliver the soul; at any moment the Lord may come along the way thus prepared for him. It is like the "thief in the night"; or it is like Pippa's song; or it is like the light-beam which falls upon the explosive machine. The cause has been long at work and accumulating; the occasion may be trivial.

The main thing is that the messenger is perhaps even now at your door—

A little child, a breath of air, an old man hobbling on

<sup>1</sup> *T D.*, p. 253.

crutches, a bee lighting on the page of your book—who knows whom He may send ? <sup>1</sup>

For Amiel, it was the sight of three butterflies ; for Moses, the sun setting behind a thorn-bush ; for Linnæus, a flame of mountain-gorse ; for Jesus, a dove hovering over the tamarisks by Jordan's bank.

Wonderful ! The doors that were closed stand open. Yet how slight a thing it is.

The upturning of a palm ? The curve of a lip, an eyelid ? Nothing.

Nothing that can be seen with the mortal eye or heard by the ear, nothing that can be definitely thought, spoken, or written in a book—

Yet the doors that were treble-bolted and barred, and the doors weed-overgrown and with rusty old hinges, Fly open of themselves.<sup>2</sup>

Carpenter never seems to weary of asserting this promise, which is the old eschatological prophecy of the New Testament, “ Ye know not the day nor the hour when the Son of Man cometh,” in a new setting :

That day—the day of deliverance—shall come to you in what place you know not ; it shall come, but you know not the time.

In the pulpit while you are preaching the sermon, behold ! suddenly the ties and the bands—in the cradle and the coffin, the cerements and swathing-clothes—shall drop off.

In the prison One shall come ; and the chains which

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 176.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

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are stronger than iron, the fetters harder than steel, shall dissolve—you shall go free for ever. . . .

All tools shall serve.

The spade shall serve. It shall unearth a treasure beyond price. . . .

The writer shall write, the compositor shall set up, the student by his midnight lamp shall read, a word never seen before.

The engine-driver shall drive in faith through the night. With one hand on the regulator he shall lean sideways and peer into the darkness—and lo! a new signal not given in the printed instructions shall duly in course appear<sup>1</sup>;

the passage culminating in a memorable sentence, a touch of real genius :

The Magdalen shall run down to answer the knock at the door, and Jesus her lover himself shall enter in.<sup>2</sup>

But while all experience has this eliciting and delivering virtue, there are certain kinds of experience which appear to work with especial directness and force to this end ; they may, for this reason, be called the great experiences of life. They are Pain, Love, and the Moral Struggle. To these we must now turn, and examine in detail.

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 231.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 233.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE VALUE OF PAIN

"For she is the vestal virgin consecrated to the service of the immortal perfection, and when she takes her true place before the altar of the Infinite she casts off her dark veil and bares her face to the beholder as a revelation of supreme joy."—TAGORE, *Sadhana*.

#### ARGUMENT

*The solution of the Problem of Pain is the disclosure of its lifeward function. This can be done in respect of many kinds of pain ; but there remains a residuum of apparently purposeless pain ; at this point, where the problem is obstinate, the important thing to do is to find the right practice of life. Carpenter suggests that the purpose of such pain may possibly be to teach us how to ignore it, and evolve past it.*

*Pleasure and pain are often experienced as continuous, an increment in the stimulus causing a pleasurable, to pass into a painful, sensation. Pain quickens the deeper areas of consciousness, and so ministers to psychic growth.*

*This is as true of society as it is of the individual ; suffering in the social body indicates growth at that point ; and all sufferers, whatever be the occasion of their pain, form a brotherhood in whose tra-*

*vail the higher race-consciousness is coming to birth.*

THE problem of pain may be said to be solved in so far as it can be shown, the world being what it is, that pain performs a valuable and lifeward function in the race-life. It is unquestionable that, in respect of large areas of pain, this can be shown. It is obvious, for example, that, in a multitude of cases, pain has a purifying influence, acting on life as "a refiner's fire"; the "cleansing fires" of pain is no baseless poetical hyperbole. Again, in the economy of the body, individual and social, pain has a protective value, and serves as a danger-signal; it is the way in which we become conscious of a struggle which begins, as it were automatically, wherever health is threatened by devitalizing agencies. A man's life is never in such real danger as when an attack upon his health-reserves is made so insidiously and so subtly that, for some reason or other, it does not ascend into consciousness as pain; his sentinels are either slain, or drugged, or asleep, and the enemy is past them into the citadel.

Further, on the hypothesis of social solidarity, the innocent must often and necessarily suffer with the guilty; an unmerited pain, in this case, being the sign of the community of life, the obverse side of the fact that "no man liveth unto himself"; that we should suffer inevitably through the weaknesses of some one is, as it were,



the price we have to pay for the equally inevitable advantage which accrues to us through the strength of others who are bound with us "in the bundle of life."

There are some who, answering a wider law than that which operates in the material universe, take upon themselves an apparently voluntary pain; an act which satisfies in the highest degree the pragmatical test, for out of such is the Kingdom of Heaven. In their case, pain works as the liberator of latent powers; the spear-thrust is followed by the life-stream flowing from the "riven side," and the death of one (not necessarily physical) is the way whereby all enter into a fuller life. There is also the further fact at which the familiar words hint, of rising on "the stepping-stones of our dead selves," or of being "made perfect through the things which He suffered." In this case, pain is the index of the ascent of spiritual life against the weight and pressure of material circumstance. The infinite in man rises against and through the gravity of the imposed condition of finitude.

These and such considerations cover large areas of the mortal experience of pain, to some extent explain it—that is to say, demonstrate its life-ward function, show it to be good—and to that extent solve the problem. There remains, however, a residuum of pain which apparently serves no useful purpose—accidents, epidemics, disasters, and the like, which destroy valuable lives

and plunge families and whole communities into dismay, if not despair ; here the crux of the problem lies. It remains a mystery, some day perhaps to be made plain, but in the meantime challenging us to find the right practice of life in respect to it.

Carpenter helps us to that right practice partly by throwing light upon the problem itself, and partly by suggesting a healthy, calm, balanced attitude towards it, so far as it is insoluble ; for, whatever the right practice may be, clearly the wrong practice is futile anger and miserable complaining.

The counsel of Piety is that we should “ trust where we cannot trace,” and believe that all is under the governance of an All-wise Providence ; that there is a hidden purpose in seemingly purposeless pain—for example, it may be corrective chastening or testing discipline ; as such, it must be endured. “ Beloved, we are in God’s Hand ; I feel He laid the fetter ; let it lie.”

From the practical point of view, this is not bad advice ; it tends, however, to produce, in spite of much patient heroism, a type of morbid and mawkish sentimentalism, due probably to the assumption that behind every accident or misfortune there is a divine particular purpose with a definite individual reference. Some people take pride in being the victims of God’s uncomfortable attentions.

The counsel of Common Sense is somewhat as

follows: problems are not everything, there is Life also; it were a pity to be so occupied with the former as to miss the zest and glory of the latter; we are set amid hazards and hardships, but what man worth his salt would ask for anything else? What healthy man wants an easy, sheltered life? We ask for risk and venture. We want an arena worthy of our virtues of courage and endurance. We want to prove our soul. We want to dwell in danger. The risks and perils of the world are precisely what go to make it the best of all possible worlds for the fashioning of brave, reliant, masterful men. To assert this in action is the life of faith.

Carpenter's counsel, which is closely allied to this last, though somewhat less vigorous, more oriental (let us say) than Nietzschean, is thus given in a recent article on the "Mystery of Pain" in the *English Review*.<sup>1</sup>

It often seems extremely hard on people that they should suffer, as they do in some cases, considerable pain over a long series of years, and in a seemingly useless way. . . . It seems purely negative and wasteful. . . . The subject is a puzzling one. . . . It may be, however, that out of this seeming impasse the human soul—which ultimately overcomes all obstacles—is destined to find its way. Faced by the problem of useless pain—of pain pure and simple, unrelieved apparently by any compensation of pleasure or profit—it may be that the soul is destined to learn the art of passing it by, of ignoring it, of leaving pain lying and travelling beyond. . . . Such an art

<sup>1</sup> July 1914.

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has been known and studied in the past ; the old Vedic sages spoke of " severing the connexion of pain " ; they taught a method by which the mind could, at will, be so far severed from the senses that the painful affections of the latter could, if need arose, be barred from reaching the mind.

Some light is thrown upon this ancient habit of severing " the connexion of pain " by the modern discovery that the sensory tracts, by means of which sensations pass to the brain from the various sense-organs, do not consist of continuous nerves, but rather of a series of short nerve-structures, called neurons, set end to end but not in permanent contact ; contact is made by means of radiating terminal fibres which, under certain conditions, have the power of withdrawing themselves from their neighbours ; in which case, as in sleep or reverie, the stimulus received by the sense does not reach the brain. The problem of the conquest of pain would seem therefore to resolve itself into the problem of securing some control of the terminal fibres of the neurons. Clearly, however, since pain has sometimes a protective value, this method of dealing with pain would, if applied all round and indiscriminately, be mischievous ; and, to the Western mind at least, it will always appear that the virtue of self-control with a view to endurance and self-assertion is of greater value than when practised solely with a view to avoidance and escape.

The article just referred to contains a charac-



teristic and original contribution by Carpenter to our conception of the function of pain in human life. He points out that there is a certain continuousness between pleasure and pain, alike in physical and psychical experiences. The same sensation may be pleasurable in its milder form, and painful if it is intensified beyond a certain limit. But, strangely enough, in some cases a still further prolongation of the sensation issues in a new pleasure, different in quality from the first. As an illustration, Carpenter cites the effect of Arabic music.

The performance begins with a pleasant phrase which gratifies the ear. But the phrase is repeated and repeated *ad nauseam*, until the listener longs for it to cease. He hates, but is obliged to hear it; and then presently the pain of it fades away, and a strange mesmeric and ecstatic swoon takes its place.

This is explained by saying that an excitement which is strong enough to be painful has the effect of wakening an underplane of consciousness which before had been dormant; as felt in this underplane, the excitement is mild, and so pleasurable. So pleasure and pain may exist side by side, but at different levels of consciousness.

In the case of the soldier, the very pain and fury of the battle excite and throw up into relief the ancient and wild enthusiasm of cause and country, long perhaps dormant within him; and swept on this tide of feeling he forgets his wounds.



So also, in reading the story of some heroic action, we weep, but at the same time we are conscious of great inward elation. The physical pain which accompanied the initiation ceremonies among primitive peoples may have been suggested by a vague intuition that only so could the inner powers of courage and sympathy, and the group-consciousness itself as an active principle, be quickened in the individual. Pain "gets through" somehow, and rouses the deeper regions of consciousness into life and activity. It is seen here, therefore, as the mediator of psychic growth.

It would almost seem that one ought to regard the human being as composed of layers, many perhaps, one within the other—something like the "shells" described by the Theosophists. Then one can imagine that an agitation, reaching the outer sheath, might produce a reaction there which would be felt as pleasure. But after a time the agitation increasing would begin to be too strong and, tending to disintegrate and damage the sheath, would be felt as pain. With the continuation of the process, however, the agitation would penetrate through and reach the second sheath, where it would be felt as pleasure again. The first sheath would begin to wither, and the second sheath would begin to grow . . . So the process might go on from sheath to sheath even to the very centre of Life. The whole process is one of growth. At each stage there is pain, and the separation and rejection of a husk, and at each stage there is pleasure, and the awakening of a new and more central life.

Just as the husk and kernel of a nut are, to begin with, undifferentiated from each other,

but as the process of ripening goes on—a process which is always in the manner of a dying to an outward self—the kernel slowly dissociates and liberates itself from the husk, until the shell is broken and the kernel becomes the seed of a new plant ; so

a time comes when the inner man recognizes himself as distinct from his outer frame, and sees with composure his body fade—conscious that within and deep in himself is the seed of a new life, or of many new lives.

How far this hypothesis of the successive layers will satisfy the psychologists need not be argued here ; the testimony of the experience of many is that, when all else had failed, pain got through the crust of selfish materialistic habit, and touched, loosened, set free the diviner, more satisfying, life within. This is Carpenter's justification for acclaiming pain as the Quickener, the Redeemer. He apostrophizes Sorrow as

the gift of gifts, revealer of eternal joy.<sup>1</sup>

He thinks of Humanity, not so much as lying limitlessly out and around in the spaces of the world or in the vistas of history, but rather as the deeper Self of each, the all-embracing kingdom which is "within you"—(yet the former is in extension precisely what the latter is in intension)—and cries in ecstasy and triumph,

After all,

Nearer to thy heart, O Humanity,

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 155.

By this of suffering we come.

I know that thou canst not deny me ;

I know that each pain is a door by which I approach  
one degree nearer to thee.

What sorrow is there but I have shared it ?

What grief but it has removed an obstruction between  
me and some one else ?

Look in my face and see. You cannot bar me now.

I pass all doors, and am where I would be.<sup>1</sup>

Pain, more than anything else, with its sharp stinging punctures the dividing film. It is the acid which dissolves the barriers. It breaks through accumulated encrustation, like "a hammer that breaketh the rock into pieces." It ministers to the separated individual entrance into the City of Selves, and gives him the freedom thereof. It is a constriction which facilitates parturition. Just as the penetrating beam of the spring Sun co-operates with the developing, interior, as yet confined, life of the Imago, and helps burst the restraining chrysalis cerement, so that the Life which formerly was bound to the lowly and earthy places manifests its reality as a "winged spirit" ascending into a new, more joyous, more spacious activity; so is pain the deliverer of the soul. It "endures but for a moment" and "works a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

Grief passes, sorrow endures for a moment ;

To a certain stage belonging it dogs the footsteps of  
the individual ;

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 286

Then fading and passing it leaves him free, a new creature, transfigured to more than mortal. . . .

Not pleasure alone is good, but pain also ; not joy alone, but sorrow ;

Freed must the psyche be from the pupa, and pain is there to free it.

Throes and struggles and clenchings of teeth—but pain is there to free it.

Lo ! the prison walls must fall—even though the prisoner tremble.

Long the strain, sometimes seeming past endurance—then the dead shell gives way, and a new landscape discloses.

Curtain behind curtain, wall behind wall, life behind life ;

Dying here, to be born there, passing and passing and passing,

At last a new creature behold, transfigured to more than mortal !

For brief after all is pain, but joy, ah ! joy is eternal !

And thin the veil that divides, the subtle film of illusion—

The prison-wall so slight, at a touch it parts and crumbles,

And opens at length on the sunlit world and the winds of heaven.<sup>1</sup>

With courage, insight, and all the venture-someness of the true prophet, Carpenter applies this, which he finds true of the individual, to the larger individual, Society. There is pain in the social body. It has protective value. It announces the presence at that point of active disintegrating forces. It is the index of mal-

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 364.

adjustment of parts. It is the symptom of disease. It calls aloud, less for conditional relief, than for reconstruction, reorganization on a new principle.

The State—which is the Community acting as a corporate whole—recognizes this fact, e.g. in the “party-system” of government, and is aware of its significance. The antagonism which is found to exist between the two main parties in every state—the one standing for the old, the other for the new, the one for Order, the other for Progress, the one for conservation, the other for reconstruction—is apparent only; unconsciously to the individuals themselves who compose them, they are in subtle co-operation; both are needed. For just as in the reconstruction of a railway station, which has become almost obsolete because of the development of the community-life, it is necessary that, if the traffic is not to be utterly dislocated or stopped altogether, the old structure should be underpinned and upheld while the new is substituted piecemeal; just as the confinement and restraint of the chrysalis-sheath is necessary while the myriad minute agents pull down the larval body and out of the old material build up the imago-body; so in the successful reconstruction of the social order it is necessary that the *status quo* should be supported while the foundations are being relaid, and effective arrangements substituted for obsolete ones; the old sanctions must be main-



tained until the new pillars are firmly established which shall bear the new structure. Party antagonisms are real and not fictitious. They focus and represent an actual division, discord, conflict of interests, in the body politic. But they are subtly co-operative towards effective reconstruction and permanent betterment. Both acknowledge the necessity of progress, but while the one concentrates on the actual making of the required changes, the other concentrates on securing the best condition and method of change.

All this may be admitted; the deepest fact, however, is that new structure is demanded by a new spirit. It is not enough to see that social pain is an indication that something is wrong; it must be recognized also that that which makes any actual state of things wrong is the uprising, the upthrust, of a potentially better state of things coming on to realization; the imperfection of any structure or organization can only be detected and condemned by the arising of the more perfect thing first as light and feeling and vision and dream—the substantial adamantine impalpabilities—in the more sensitive areas of the consciousness of the community. Wherever pain exists in a community, its profoundest significance is that, at that point, something is getting through the outer sheath to quicken interior forces, propagate inward growth, foster spiritual development, and ultimately to deliver to itself the soul of a people.

Carpenter is bold enough to say that this is true whatever form the suffering may take. In our ready, superficial, way we are apt to regard sufferers as the unfortunate ones of the earth, objects for pity, victims of mischance and unlucky fate, dumb suppliants for relief. After a time we get hardened to their presence, and scarcely think of them at all. There they lie,

undone, forsaken,  
Tossed impatiently back from the whirling iron—  
The broken wheels, or may be merely defective—  
Who cares ? <sup>1</sup>

Carpenter indicates at least the possibility of a different standpoint. With lyrical passion he sings of them as the bruised heart of the people out of which issues the promise of a higher, freer life :

Who cares ? Who cares ?  
O tear-laden heart !  
O blown white rose heavy with rain !  
O sacred heart of the people !  
Rose, of innumerable petals, through the long night  
ever blossoming !  
Surely by thy fragrance wafted through the still  
night-air,  
Surely by thy spirit exhaled over the sleeping world,  
I know,  
Out of the bruised heart of thee exhaled, I know—  
And the vision lifts itself before my eyes.<sup>2</sup>

In outstanding cases we recognize the truth of

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 126.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.

this. None but the sentimentally pious regard the sufferings of Jesus—to take an obvious example—with pity. So austere, majestic, sublime an agony requires silence, awe, reverence, a humbling of one's self, but pity is, of all things, most out of place. Our pity is but the betrayal of our own cowardice in the presence of pain. We have lived long enough to see what was coming up into the world through Jesus; no such thing as that could be delivered from the heart of a human being without a pain of which only the mothers of the world know the depth; no such thing could arise in the circumstances amid which the life of Jesus was set without breakage, profound schism as of an earthquake cracking and distorting the crust of the earth, the loosening of elemental human passions, and an infinite stress issuing in damage to everything, including the redeemer's mortal part, that could be broken and destroyed. Here we see pain working in all the nakedness of its truth. The pain which Jesus bore and brought in the world was indicative of a disunity which was rotting society like a disease. It fostered psychic growth, both in the world—for in Christianity the Western world suffered rebirth; and in himself—for he was made perfect—the word means that he came to his blossom—through suffering; it mediated the last potential in him, which (let it always be remembered) was a race-potential as well as an individual-potential. Pain ever

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works so. He was one of the exceptional cases which test the rule.

We are apt to regard the sufferings of Jesus as voluntary, but having respect to that which was in him, and to the situation amid which it came to manifestation, the agony was involuntary; he could not save himself, he could do no other. Just as involuntary—and maybe if we knew all, though it requires a prophet's venture of faith to assert it, just as significant in its own measure,—is the suffering of the slum-worker in the sweater's den, and the suffering of the criminal in the prison cell.

It was when he looked upon a picture of the dead Christ by Fra Bartolomeo that Carpenter's mind leaped from the particular to the general, and saw in one the truth of all;

O People crucified in every land,  
Mothers in all the earth weeping your sons!  
Sisters and lovers kissing the feet of love,  
Poor way-worn feet, gross toil-disfigured hands,  
So loved, so loved!

Once more the dead Christ lies, borne down the ages.<sup>1</sup>

To his vision, all the world's sufferers are seen compacted together and forming the central organ of the race-body—"O tender heart of our humanity." They together are the "suffering servant," who is the Messiah. This heart, bruised, pouring forth its soul unto death (but

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 271.

on that account dividing the spoil with the strong and having its portion with the great), contains within itself the promise of the future. It is the bleeding heart whose drops are to be transformed into the flowers of the new life which shall be brought to manifestation in the next spring-time of the race.

O buds and blossoms of Spring once more returning,  
Bright waters flowing, O heavenly blue still shining,  
And Thou still spreading over all and changeless,  
O tender heart of our humanity,  
O bleeding sacred heart, with tears of ages.<sup>1</sup>

This has affinity with Maeterlinck's suggestion that, had we the mystic vision, we should stand with great reverence before such as the world calls depraved and makes outcast; for the pure soul within them, wedded to coarse and passionate flesh, buried there in the lowest earth-levels of all, has the hardest task to perform, the most grievous burden to bear. The world "with coarse thumb and finger" judges the suffering of some to be honourable, and of others dishonourable. Of the obscure, submerged, dumb mass of suffering it takes but little heed, save when a lurid light is suddenly cast into the darker places of the earth; and then it speaks of Chance, Luck, or the Necessity of Things; or with impious piety convicts of evil-doing those "upon whom the Tower of Siloam fell." To Religion, they are ears for the gospel of another world; to Biology, they are

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 325.



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the weaker going to the wall in the struggle for existence ; to Psychology, they are pathological cases ; to Philanthropy, they are objects of pity ; to the Reformer, they are a stubborn economic problem ; to Carpenter, they are none other than the " tender heart of our Humanity, the bleeding sacred heart, with tears of ages." The pathway of the future lies more in the direction of Wormwood Scrubs than of Park Lane ; the Star comes to rest over the East, rather than the West ; humanity is nearer to the slave goaded into rebellion, than to the owner whose cruelty drives him thither ; divinity is nearer at hand to the prostitute, than to the Pharisee who needs no repentance.

Poets, with general approval, have sung the praises of the martyr, the hero, the saviour, those who have led pain's captivity captive and given conspicuous gifts unto men ; it waited for Edward Carpenter that one should arise with vision deep and broad enough to see, without discrimination of cause or occasion or motive, the " brotherhood of sufferers," and to interpret it and its manifold pain as the race-womb constricted and agonized in parturition of the higher holier-humanity.

So still to all—

To those lingering in prison,

To the aged and forsaken, stranded like wrecks on the bleak shore of life,

To the heartbroken and weary, to those stunned with despair ;

To the wife awaking to the treachery of her husband ;  
 To the exile leaving his dear ones, and probably for  
 ever ; to the crippled and incapable and diseased ;

To the pinned workers in back streets oscillating  
 drearily between the home and the workshop ;

To those of the hopeless, sad, mechanical days over all  
 the earth—the outcast, the shunned, the persecuted,

The closing days, the narrowing grooves, the heart  
 touched no more by the sweet illusions, no more to hope  
 responding, no more to the call of religion ;

Ah, to all in the mighty brotherhood sufferers—

Dearest, most precious ones,

Corner-stones of human life, hidden bearers of bur-  
 dens, undergirders of the great ship with its incalculable  
 freight !

Dearest and most precious of all—ah, sufferers,  
 sufferers,

To you we give our love—

Arise ! for great is your triumph ! <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 289

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE VALUE OF MORAL CONFLICT

"By my Love and Hope, I conjure thee ; cast not away the Hero in thy soul !"—NIETZSCHE.

#### ARGUMENT

*The Moral conflict has its individual and its social aspect. The purpose of moral effort is directed to an end not to be realized in the moral plane, for Life is not interested in perfections, and a perfect moral being (or society) could only arise where the main life-stream had receded. The perfect life is not that which is fitted to purpose or conformed to standard, but that which is lived loyally in self-expression from the heart. In contrast with the conventional social virtues, the true Virtue is the "health of the soul." Moral pains, therefore, are the birth-pains of a deeper than the moral consciousness. There is a Beyond Morality. The opposition between good and evil must be faithfully dealt with, but must ultimately be transcended. Carpenter denies that there is a moral dualism ; good and evil are not properties inherent in the nature of things, but are relative to the will, and all things are good to the man who has mastery over them. To such a man Satan appears as Lover and*

*Son of God, and Evil is the challenge of a good which dares the soul up to possess it.*

THE subject of this chapter is a special application of the general situation disclosed in the one immediately preceding. The Moral Conflict is a species of pain; it is a wrestling "with principalities and powers"; and its function is that of pain. It has, however, a peculiar importance of its own, and a discussion of it will serve to bring into prominence one or two matters, including the Problem of Evil, upon which Carpenter's teaching is both original and impressive.

The Moral Conflict may be described, in general terms, as the struggle with temptation on the arena of the individual heart, and the warfare against evil in the wider fields of race-progress. Those who are sensitive to the "upward calling" of life, experience it as personal discipline, and as the storm and stress of social redemption and reformation.

In any conflict, it is to the advantage of the fighter to know—if such is possible—precisely what end is being achieved through it. It is true that success does not depend absolutely upon this: it is not necessary, for example, that the rank and file of an army should be aware of the objective of an engagement or of a campaign. And it may be admitted that, so far as the wider social aspect of moral effort is concerned, we—

the individuals who take part in the controversies, reformations, revolutions—are being led by a way that we know not ; we are building other and bigger than we know ; the more immediate end which we seek is by no means the same as the ultimate end towards which the immanent Truth or Ideal is bringing on the race-life, and it is at least possible that “ that one far-off divine event ” may be as well served by our failure to achieve our perceived objective, as by our success. But so far as the individual aspect of Moral Effort is concerned—and it is with this that we have more particularly to do here—we are not in the position of the rank and file who must not reason why ; we are at any rate potential “ masters of our Fate,” and it would be to our advantage to have some clear idea as to what the purpose of the moral life may be ; we should then engage in it with intelligence as well as strength, with knowledge as well as zeal.

It is probable that the ordinary man is under a delusion as to what the purpose and end of moral effort may be. If he were interrogated, he would say that moral striving, so far as individual life is concerned, looks towards the fashioning of perfect moral beings ; and so far as social life is concerned, the building up of a perfect state, a final and permanent kingdom of heaven upon earth. This answer is the obvious and natural one, and therefore most likely the wrong one ; it is the delusion of horizontalism, due to



the fact that we tend to express even spiritual movement in terms of space and time. The true line of progress is vertical, not horizontal; it is the gradual disclosure of what is deeper within, not the slow attainment of that which is farther on. The idea of a perfect moral being coming at last, after the moulding and polishing of years (perhaps ages) of experience, to stand amid an immortal company of similarly perfected beings, will have to be relegated to the place whither, already, the idea of a heaven "far beyond the clouds" has gone. It is indeed conceivable that, in course of time, perfect moral beings, and a perfect moral society, should come into existence on the earth; but that could only be when the main life-stream had receded from those places and was moving forward elsewhere. For Life, so far as we are able to understand it, is not concerned about producing perfections of any kind, is not at all interested in them. A perfected thing is a thing which Life has finished with. Perfection is never found in the main-stream, but only in the backwaters, of Life. Perfections are side-issues, not main issues, of Life. A perfect organization only arises when the primal life-pulses have subsided, and an attenuated and slowly stagnating energy has nothing to do but to weave its shroud. Perfection is the legend written across the dead end of a cul-de-sac. There are perfections in Nature—a wasp's nest, for example, or a bee-hive—but these occur at

the end of blind alleys from which, a long way back, the main life-channel forked away.

Be not careful about perfections ; I declare to you the day shall come when everything shall be perfect to you.<sup>1</sup>

That places us at quite a different point of view.

The word " perfect " carries several meanings. The idea of perfection when applied to a gem has a different content than when applied to a flower. The method of attaining perfection in the former case is artificial, in the latter it is natural ; the one comes by pressure and friction from without, the other in loyal answer to an urge from within ; moral perfection, as commonly understood, approximates more to the former than to the latter ; and this should give us pause. (It deserves also to be said in passing that, so far as perfection may be attributed to a flower, it applies to the deadly nightshade as much as to the honeysuckle, its neighbour on the hedgerow.)

One of the profoundest words, and the subtlest—a hard saying indeed—ever spoken concerning perfection is that which the evangelist places on the lips of Jesus :

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.

How can this be ? Is such perfection possible ?

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 100.

It is, as a matter of fact, the only perfection which is possible.

We use the word "perfection" in the sense of strict conformity to standard; we speak of a perfect copy, or of a perfect specimen; in the sense, also, of fitness to purpose, as when we praise a perfect fit, or a perfect instrument. In neither of these senses, however, is the idea applicable to God, who has no standard to conform to, and who, as the great "I am," the "Beginning and the Ending," has no purpose to serve. The perfection of God can only be defined in terms of pure spontaneity, directness, unmotivedness, in self-expression; with Him, law, life, and impulse "are one thing." Anthropomorphically, He is, in all His acts, Himself and from the heart. Creation is His play, as the Sanskrit term implies—unmotived self-forthpouring.

He causeth the sun to shine upon the evil and upon the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and the unjust.

So far, therefore, as perfection is set before us as the end of life—and it is well that it should be, since it is one with Freedom and Happiness—we must not seek it as the issue of the process of being moulded, whether by force or consent, into conformity with some external standard of virtue; but rather along the line of acquiring with increasing surety and strength the ability to live out our lives finely, freely, fully, from the heart, making them loyally and without shame

as complete an expression as possible of what we are—"perfect, as the Father is perfect."

It need scarcely be said that the virtues are devices whereby the social order tries to protect and preserve itself as against the spontaneity and impulsiveness of the individual ; they are no less valid or worthy in their place on that account ; but to perceive this is to see that personal perfection, if it is at all a dignified aspiration, cannot be attained by conformity to conventional standards, and submission to the moulding pressure of organized opinion. The virtues are not ends in themselves, but have Society's end of self-preservation to serve. We are, therefore, only mocked and self-deluded if we make the practice of the virtues an end in itself ; it is a means to an end.

That your Self be in your act, as the mother is in the child—be this your formula of Virtue.<sup>1</sup>

The perfect life is the life lived from the heart ; it is the free life, the creative life. The attainment of perfection is, like the attainment of Freedom, the disclosure of the more inward life-centre, its establishment, the gathering and knitting together of the personality there, so that the Self may be expressed therefrom, not loosely or spasmodically, or with mere impulse of bravado and defiance, but with fine temper, constancy, holiness, self-love, and measureless trust.

The practice of the virtues is seen, then, to be

<sup>1</sup> Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*.

a means to the attainment of Virtue, in the Nietzschean sense ; and the discipline and labour of moral effort, like pain, looks towards the growth and delivery of the Soul.

There is something other than moral perfection at issue ; you are not to aim at being a perfect moral being, but to enter heartily into the moral conflict, expecting your arrival therethrough at a point, as it were, of higher personal standing from which " everything shall be perfect to you." The moral life is not the highest life. There is a beyond morality. There is a deeper than the moral consciousness.

I do not turn you back from self-seeking ; on the contrary, I know that you shall never rest till you have found your Self ;

If you seek it in Duty, Goodness, Renunciation, they are very well for a time ; but you will do better.<sup>1</sup>

Just as the ultimate issue of the competitive struggle for existence in the sub-human kingdom is not the creation of perfect animals, but the birth of a higher order of creature, so the ultimate issue of moral effort is not realized in the moral plane. Moral pains are the birth-pains of another and a deeper than the moral consciousness. Morality is a midwife, its end is that the Son of God be delivered in us. What we win in the moral conflict is ourselves at a higher point. " The law is a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ."

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 101.



We have said that it is an advantage to the man who is engaged in the practice of the moral life to have some understanding of what its end may be. As commonly presented, the moral life is a dreary and hopeless affair. The process of becoming better and better, or being more and more highly polished morally, is a wearisome and unromantic business at best ; all the more so because the approach to the Ideal of Perfection requires an infinite time, and is like the asymptotic curve which constantly approximates to, but never meets, the ordinate ; the vision of the ever-receding rainbow, or of the " leagues and still more leagues," is in time depressing to the stoutest heart. Moreover, the man who aims at continuous moral improvement as an end in itself finds—probably to his intense disappointment—that if all the zest and swing and passion and vitality have not been worked out of him, he is constantly the victim of sudden impulses and surgent feelings and waves of exhilarating exuberant life which sweep him off his feet, inrupt upon his virtuous habit, spoil his pretty plans for himself, and thrust him caught unawares out of bounds. The Church, playing Society's game, teaches him to regard such things as evil, and of the devil ; makes him ashamed of himself ; calls him to repentance and the " getting up and beginning again." To such a man, it will be a real help to know that while moral effort is not to be despised, still less to be avoided, its end is not

moral perfection, the getting better and better according to some objective conventional standard. The moral plane must be lived through, but must ultimately be transcended. The practice of morality arises on the plane of opposition between good and evil; that opposition must be faithfully dealt with for so far, and so long, as may be necessary; but its significance is found in a resistance the confronting of which develops the deeper latencies of personality; and, sooner or later, it must be left behind, the very effort and striving having raised the man to a higher point from which he sees everything to be perfect, seeming evil manifests as good, and Satan is revealed as Lover and Son of God.

Lo! the Moral laws so long swathing the soul, loosing, parting at last for the liberation of that which they prepared.<sup>1</sup>

We have now come within sight of the problem of good and evil to which Carpenter offers a solution contained, at any rate in its most dramatic form, in a striking and completely original poem, "The Secret of Time and Satan."

The problem of good and evil can only arise in an imperfect world. If the world were either perfectly good, or perfectly evil, there would be no problem. The problem arises in respect of human life only because it shares the imperfection of the world; there is no problem of good and

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 105.

evil in the Garden of Eden on the one hand, or in the traditional Hell on the other.

It is important, therefore, to determine if possible the significance of this imperfection. Answers to this question will vary, and with them the way in which the problem of good and evil will be presented. Is world-imperfection something fixed and immutable? Are the imperfections part of its essential nature? Is life like a woven fabric in which there are white strands (good), and black strands (evil)?

In that case the problem of good and evil would consist simply in sorting out and labelling the good and the evil elements respectively—the black and the white strands; for, from this point of view, these are ultimate and irreducible, and are what they always have been and always will be. This standpoint, however, is scarcely tenable to-day; we are bound to regard the world as moving, growing, developing. The figure of the black and the white strands will then fail us; things will not be good and evil in themselves, but good or evil in relation to some central life-principle which determines the process of development. The evolutionary hypothesis strikes a mortal blow at the idea of a radical dualism between good and evil. The Unity of Nature is not consistent with the coexistence of two primary, fundamental, and opposite principles. Whatever good and evil may be, it is now practically impossible to regard them as two eternally contrary

principles, dividing the kingdom between them, and sending a permanent rift and schism through the heart of the universe. Some form of monism is demanded. Either one or other of them must be primary, or both must be aspects of some higher principle—as, for example, the Zoroastrians teach that Ormuzd and Ahriman divide the lower world between them, but in the upper world dwells Ahura transcendent and sovereign over both.

Human imperfection, again, must be regarded as a stage in a process of development. Our imperfection is at once the sign and the condition of our growth. It is not possible to separate out the good and the evil elements in a man, balancing them over against each other in computation of his moral worth, much as the white corpuscles in the blood might be separated from the red. A man's life is not like a threaded string of multicoloured beads. It is fluid, mobile, organic ; it lives, grows, changes ; what is harmful at one stage is beneficial at another. For him, therefore, things are not good or evil in themselves, but in relation to life-movement, man-growth. We cannot regard ourselves as being confronted with all possible things, duly labelled and pigeonholed ; all in this place being "good," and all in that "evil" ; so that if we pick and choose from the one we become thereby the better, or, if from the other, the worse. A thing is good or otherwise only in relation to you,



and to you as an individual who are constantly growing and changing. The determining factor, then, in the question of good and evil is not something inherent in the things themselves, but something in you who enter into relations with them. Things are good or evil only in relation to your will.

There are those who say that evil is altogether unreal and illusory; that there is no need to fight against it, all that is necessary being to convince one's self that one is mistaken when one thinks one sees it. Others give it just a shadow of reality, or the reality of a shadow; "it is the shadow where the light should be." Others, like Robert Browning, urge that the opposition between good and evil grounds in that uncertainty which characterizes all our knowledge; we do not apprehend at once, he says, the true nature of anything, and are therefore perpetually subject to doubt; but precisely this doubt makes the moral life possible, since our choices are conditioned by the real risk of making mistakes, and so acquire a necessary element of venture. Others, using the analogy of travellers in a railway train who see outside objects rushing in the opposite direction, or of the ascending balloonist who sees the earth falling swiftly downwards beneath him, interpret evil as the illusory backwardness of things which is due only to the forwardness of the main life-movement, and is an index of it.

In contrast with the subtlety of these explana-



tions of the dual phenomenon of good and evil, Carpenter brings us back to the elemental thing—the human will acting in the midst of the world-order. It is for him a question of inward mastery. There is no real dualism, only a practical dualism on the moral plane. There are not good things and evil things for us to choose between, like a man might choose between healthy and unhealthy food. Nature is non-moral, and all possible objects of desire take their moral quality only in relation to the will.

For (over and over again) there is nothing that is evil except because a man has not mastery over it; and there is no good thing that is not evil if it have mastery over a man;

And there is no passion or power, or pleasure or pain, or created thing whatsoever, which is not ultimately for man and for his use—or which he need be afraid of, or ashamed at.

The ascetics and the self-indulgent divide things into good and evil—as it were to throw away the evil;

But things cannot be divided into good and evil, but all are good so soon as they are brought into subjection.<sup>1</sup>

This theory is so sound as to be almost indisputable; experience supports it through and through. There are energies quick and potent within human nature which, if they have the mastery, drag a man back into the pit; which, on the other hand, according as they are mastered and controlled by the central will, are like glorious

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 362.

fine-mettled steeds which bear the chariot of the life up to the heights.

Contrariwise, a generous instinct—surely one of the best things in the world—if it passes out of control, grows upon a man so that he is incapable of saying “no,” or of making a sound judgment, and his whole character slops over. Here, an apparently good thing becomes evil, harmful, negative in respect of life, because it is not in subjection.

The importance of this principle cannot be exaggerated. If a man has control, all things are good ; if he has not control, nothing is good. If he has control, the world is full of allies ; if he has not control, it is crammed with foes. There is no thing or being, however high or authoritative, to which a man may surrender the throne of his will. Because the phrase

Our wills are our's to make them Thine

has been so frequently interpreted by the mind of Piety as if it meant, “Our wills are our's to make them over to Thee,” a type of character has arisen in association with religion which is the standing justification for the world's criticism of religious practice.

There is a universe of difference between conative self-identification with, and acquiescence in, the will of another. To the man who has mastery, all things are given “richly to enjoy” ; every natural energy and passion is his

faithful servant, and every experience is his good angel laden with gifts. To the man who has not mastery—ah, how true it is!—even good things turn to evil; sympathy weakens him; help renders him less able to stand alone; gifts become snares and temptations for him; opportunities, those angel-faced messengers of the forward upward life, are to him mocking spirits since he cannot seize them.

The poem from which the above quotation is taken—“The Secret of Time and Satan”—is so characteristic of Carpenter’s teaching, and of his method, that an exposition of it cannot be out of place.

It opens with a very simple and engaging question :

Is there one in all the world who does not desire to be divinely beautiful ?

To have the most perfect body—

To radiate love wherever he goes, to move in and out accepted ? <sup>1</sup>

Surely we all want that ! Then he comes close to us and whispers in our ear, “ You can have that ; the secret lies within you.”

He even gives us the hope that this body of which we become aware when we come to self-consciousness in this world, may be divinely beautiful ; but it must be on the central condition of mastery.

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 358.

All the evil that goes forth from any part of a man's body which is not possessed by himself, all the devils let loose—from a twist of the tongue or a leer of the eye, or the unmanly act of any member—and swirling into society; all the good which gathers round a man who is clean and strong—the threads drawing from afar to the tips of his fingers, the interpretations in his eyes, all the love which passes through his limbs into heaven;

What it is to command and be master of this wondrous body with all its passions and powers, to truly possess it! <sup>1</sup>

Yet this is not our only body. And while the flesh-body seems for the most part to have been given us, our other bodies we can and do create for ourselves. These other bodies lie within us, and are always emerging;

The child emerges from its mother's body, and out of that body again in time another child.

When the body which thou now hast falls away, another body shall be already prepared beneath,

And beneath that again another.<sup>2</sup>

The body is built up slowly, through many years; and our power to build up the flesh-body has been acquired—a biological fact—in the past in other bodies. In and through the experience of this present life we are acquiring power to be used in the building up of future bodies—not necessarily material. So that whether we shall, or shall not, have a body divinely beautiful depends upon ourselves; not absolutely, since we are bound to some extent to the past; but the

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 360.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 359.



power to build up a body is the most vital, significant, and comprehensive of all our human faculties.

The interior bodies are built up of ideas, of images. Take the idea of fame. A man accepts, let us say, the idea of fame for himself. In the focus of his mind he keeps an image of himself occupying some prominent position—the other sheaves bowing down to his sheaf. He has this idea before him ; it is a conspicuous feature in his night-dreams and in his day-dreams. By and by, so urgently invited, so tenaciously retained, it will come to cling to him ; he will have to carry it about with him ; he will have to feed it and satisfy it—just like a body ! As it becomes more established in the mind, it will begin to lord it over him, like a physical habit entrenched in the flesh-body. He will have to make sacrifices to it ; some of these he will not mind making to begin with, but the demand will increase and maybe sacrifices will be called for such as he will feel it wrong to make, yet will be forced to make—sacrifices of competitors, of friends, family, personal integrity and dignity, conscience, honour.

Or it may be the idea of pleasure, ease, comfort, selfish well-being. Not a few people give this a prominent and permanent place in their minds. It comes, after a time, to attach itself to them, and to cling to them. It grows like a limb of a body, and increases ever in its demands on the



life-resources. It demands their spare time, and gets it. Then they scamp and neglect their work in order to satisfy it with more spare time. They jettison one responsibility after another. They carry it about with them, and cannot shake it off.

So if thou seekest fame or ease or pleasure or aught for thyself, the image of that thing which thou seekest will come and cling to thee—and thou wilt have to carry it about ;

And the images and powers which thou hast evoked will gather round and form for thee a new body—clamouring for sustenance and satisfaction ;

And if thou art not able to discard this image now, thou wilt not be able to discard that body then ; but wilt have to carry it about.

Beware then lest it become thy grave and thy prison—instead of thy winged abode and palace of joy.<sup>1</sup>

The body may be a prison-house, or it may be a palace of joy, and it is mastery which makes the difference.

To many, the flesh-body is a prison-house ; it stands for a taskmastership ; it is an awkward companion, an embarrassing fellow. For others, it is a great joy, a most engaging comrade, ever introducing them to a fresh and beautiful world, a faithful servant ever providing them with keen pleasures and rare delights ; it is as wings to the soul ; and within its pure ordered chambers it gathers for them of the health, the beauty, the radiance that is abroad throughout the world.

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 361.

So with the inward bodies. Build them up, in the fashion just described, allowing one idea after another to gain dominance and mastery, and the inward body will be tenfold more a prison than the flesh-body.

Yet fame is not wrong to seek ; it is not evil in itself ; neither is pleasure wrong to seek : it is not wrong to want to succeed, or to enjoy life ; it is not wrong to want to be gay, and lightsome, and to love divinely. All these things are given for use, and out of them can be fashioned a winged abode and a palace of joy. But the condition is imperative, and cannot be yielded a hair's-breadth. The man must have the mastery. He can accept every experience with security and freedom, if he does not give that away.

Now, the worst of all this is that the ordinary man has not yet attained complete mastery, and therefore it sounds like a policy of perfection which tantalizes without stimulating. He is not free ; he is not master of his flesh-body, of the passion and pain that come through it ; nor of his mental-body, with its fears, doubts, and preconceived ideas, and so forth. He is not master of himself ; at best, he is striving for it. He is subject to all manner of resistance and opposition, all manner of temptation and allurements. The point at which everything shall be perfect to him seems terribly remote—if it is there at all.

To these apparently hostile forces we often give the name of Evil, for they seem to be the enemies

of our life, seeking—and with some success—to dethrone and dispossess us at the centre. This is Satan. We find Satan in many guises as an adversary, and we reckon him only as an adversary. We resist, fight, and would destroy him. What we do not always clearly see is that this is precisely the way in which we can come to mastery, and that the adversary is really the Lover of our Life in disguise. The demand upon us in this warfare is for faithfulness, courage, and a certain carelessness and abandon in onset. The end is sure, and is full of joy and glory; it may be nearer than we think; and also other than we have imagined. For in this struggle and conflict the surface impediments of our life get brushed off; unreliable weapons are tested and discarded; deeper and deeper latencies within us unfold; fresh experiences—painful enough, most of them—bring us fresh knowledge, and therefore fresh power; until at last—let Carpenter tell us in his own words:

And so at last I saw Satan appear before me—magnificent, fully formed.

Feet first, with shining limbs, he glanced down from above the bushes,

And stood there, erect, dark-skinned, with nostrils dilated with passion;

(In the burning intolerable sunlight he stood, and I in the shade of the bushes;)

Fierce and scathing the effluence of his eyes, and scornful of dreams and dreamers (he touched a rock hard by and it split with a sound like thunder);

Fierce the magnetic influence of his dusky flesh ; his great foot, well-formed, was planted firm in the sand—with spreading toes ;

“ Come out,” he said with a taunt : “ art thou afraid to meet me ? ”

And I answered not, but sprang upon him and smote him.

And he smote me a thousand times, and brashed and scorched and slew me with hands of flame ;

And I was glad, for my body lay there dead. And I sprang upon him again with another body ;

And he turned upon me, and smote me a thousand times, and slew that body ;

And I was glad and sprang upon him again with another body—

And with another and another and again another.

And the bodies which I took on yielded before him, and were like cinctures of flame upon me, but I flung them aside ;

And the pains which I endured in one body were powers which I wielded in the next ; and I grew in strength till at last I stood before him complete, with a body like his own, and equal in might—exultant in pride and joy.

Then he ceased, and said “ I love thee.”

And lo ! his form changed, and he leaned backwards, and drew me upon him.

And bore me up into the air, and floated me over the topmost trees and the ocean, and round the curve of the earth under the moon—

Till we stood again in Paradise.<sup>1</sup>

Lover indeed is he who deals not tenderly with us, giving us an arm to lean upon, but roughly with us, that we may develop that inward core

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 363.

of free personal will and self-reliance which is the pillar of manhood. Good indeed is that apparent evil which challenges and resists us, and so makes explicit the power and glory that are implicit in us. Evil is the way in which a higher good first manifests itself. That which we can see to be good, we are on a level with ; that which seems evil, conceals a good at a higher level. Evil is not the denial of good ; nor is it the shadow where the good should be ; it is the indication of the presence of a good which cannot be ours until we have won the mastery over it. Evil is the fearsome flame-armed cherubim who stand betwixt us and the Tree of Life. It is the thrusting challenge of a good which invites, taunts, dares us up to possess it.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE VALUE OF LOVE

"I think that the desire to partake, the desire to merge one's individual identity with another's, remains a necessary element in all personal love. It is a way out of ourselves, a breaking down of our individual separation, just as hate is an intensification of that. We cast aside our reserves, our secrecies, our defences; we open ourselves; touches that would be intolerable from common people become a mystery of delight, acts of self-abasement and self-sacrifice are charged with symbolical pleasure. We cannot tell which of us is me, which you. Our imprisoned egoism looks out through this window, forgets its walls, and is for those brief moments released and universal."—H. G. WELLS.

#### ARGUMENT

*Love is the universal life become conscious in the individual; it is the "I Am," the Here which is Everywhere, the Now which is Eternity. Carpenter never ceases to praise it, and offers many counsels in the Art of Loving.*

*The questions of Sex and Marriage emerge. Sex is the allegory of Love in the physical world, and the problems associated with it will not be solved until Woman has won her way out of her age-long slavery. A new quality will manifest in the race-life when Woman shares at least an equal part with Man in sexual selection.*

*Marriage, usually entered upon under the glamour of physical desire, and made a permanent bond by*

*Church and State, often proves unsuccessful when, with the fading of ardent physical attraction, incompatibilities of disposition and interest show themselves. Matrimony frequently proves the enemy of both love and life. The institution has its valuable side, but calls for reform.*

*An important social aspect of Love is suggested by the possibility of building up society on a basis of comradeship ; and some account is given of the part played in social development by individuals of a so-called " intermediate sex " and their association with each other.*

IT would be misleading if the position of this chapter in the scheme of the present study were taken to suggest that Carpenter holds Love simply to be coordinate with Pain and Moral Effort as givers of freedom, liberators of the soul. It does perform this function, but with a difference. Pain and Moral Effort help to open up the inmost chamber of personality in order that Something other than themselves may enter and abide there. Love knocks at the door, or storms the heart, that itself may enter. The other two, as they engage in their redemptive labour, continually cast glances, as it were, behind them towards One who, mightier than they, comes after them to take possession ; Love, on the other hand, comes with eyes that look straight on, as Lord and Master. They are means to an end, Love is the end itself. They are saviours, Love is both saviour and salvation, both king and kingdom.

It is one of Carpenter's fundamental tenets—perhaps *the* one—that all forms of Love, from lowest to highest, are forms of the cosmic consciousness. While many interpret the immortal phrase—the final word (if any such were ever uttered) both of religion and of life—"God is Love," as if it meant "God loves," and not seldom limit its benison to certain persons, or imagine that it can be superseded by other and contrary emotions in the divine heart, Carpenter accepts the words literally as if they formed an equation or an identity. For him, the experience of love is the experience of God. Love is the universal realized in the particular. Love is the real presence. Love is all. And, in its human reference, love is not so much one passion among others, it is the immortal aspect of a man; when a man loves, and only then, he is living his life on the universal and eternal plane. The love-life is eternal life. He who loves, knows God in that experience. Love is God coming to consciousness in man. In Love, man becomes God.

It is scarcely necessary to insert the warning here that Carpenter does not use the term "God" in the Hebraistic or even in the traditional Christian sense, but as a synonym of the Universal Being, the Spiritual Whole. His idea is nearer to that expressed in Pope's famous couplet,

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,  
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul;

if it is understood that the Soul is not something

which resides within the body ; for it is far truer to say that the body resides within the soul.

There is a very ancient and widely-used figure—the Tree of Life. Of that Tree, Love is the sap. The sap contains the creative principle within itself, and fashions the tree as its protecting body. It causes stem, branch, twig, leaf, flower, fruit, to appear in due order. The tree-form has discrete and separate parts, but the sap is continuous within. The outward tree is subject to change ; the leaf fades, the branch withers, the fruit falls to the ground ; to these changes the sap is not subject. We remember how Shelley sang,

Fate—Time—Occasion—Chance—and Change, to these  
All things are subject—but Eternal Love.

The sap has its own motion, that ceaseless ebb and flow, constriction and expansion, inhalation and exhalation—a rhythmic movement which appears to be the deepest characteristic of life ; but it is immune from seasonal changes, and has inherent power to create a succession of new forms, as if it were part of an exhaustless energy.

If, in imagination, we attribute consciousness to the tree in all the parts thereof, there would clearly be a different quality of consciousness in the leaf, or in the branch, from that in the sap. The leaves would be self-conscious in their separation from each other, their partial opposition to each other (since one leaf may stand in another's light) ; but no such consciousness

would be possible to the sap, since it is not divided in itself, but is continuous throughout the whole. By virtue of this self-consciousness, a leaf could say, "I am here, and not there"; all that the sap could say would be "I am." "Here" and "there" have no significance for it; we, from an outsider's point of view, may localize it now in the great trunk, now in the leaf-tip, but inwardly to itself, pervading the whole as it does, locality has no significance. Because it is everywhere, it is not conscious of being anywhere in particular. The leaf may say, "I was not, and soon I shall not be"; but all that the sap can say is "I am." The leaf has no present; it cannot catch itself, as it were, suspended on the fleeting moment; it has only a past and a future. The sap, on the other hand, has neither a fading past nor a dawning future, but only a present; its consciousness is of an enduring Now.

This "I am" -consciousness is the love-consciousness. Love is the I AM. Love is the self-existent life in man. It is a kind of cosmic egoism. We have a hint of this when, in moments of love-rapture, we lose consciousness of locality and of boundary. We are not conscious of here or there; we just *are*. It is not vacuity, it is fulness. We are conscious of being neither here nor there, not because we are nowhere, but because we are everywhere, and all the star-peopled spaces are within us. We say that we are out of ourselves; it would be truer to say



that, in such moments, there is nothing that is outside of us. The boundaries have removed, they have become far and tenuous in the highest degree. We are not conscious of anybody, even of the one we may hold in our arms, or of the symbol we may grasp in our hands, for we are continuous with everybody, we embrace all within ourselves.

It is but another aspect of this thought to say that Love is also the Now-consciousness. "Love strikes one hour," says Mrs. Browning; and that hour is Now. When we reflect upon our love, we may speak of its past and of its future, but that is an intellectual exercise. In the love-experience itself there is neither a past that is receding from us, nor a future which is approaching; the moment is all, but the moment is eternity. Viewing it from the outside, we may speak of a moment of love-rapture; experienced from the inside it is timeless. It is the "I am" which cannot say "I was," or "I shall be." It knows neither seasons nor ages. It says, with God, "Before the world was, I am; and when Time shall be no more, I am." Love is immortality.

If this is the meaning and reality of Love, if it is the supreme good and the supreme goal of life, then, coming down from these clouds to the highways and byways of ordinary human life, we shall find nothing therein so solemn, sacred, pure, holy, so joyous, so vital as Love, nothing so

worthy of our most lucid thought, our frankest utterance, our most gallant championship, our most abandoned surrender, and most devoted service. The subject looms large in the pages of Carpenter's writing, and his treatment of it has not been surpassed, and rarely equalled, for enthusiasm, simplicity, directness, and sheer purity of feeling and expression.

Our exposition falls naturally into two divisions according as Love is regarded in its individual, or in its social, aspect. Of the former, the more intimate way of loving, Carpenter writes invariably with freshness, delicacy, and understanding. He believes that Love has been deeply wronged in modern society by conventional poses, artificial decencies, and the prohibitions of respectability which tend to drive and keep it underground. He believes that not a few of the evils from which modern society suffers are due to this cause more than to any other. His method is far removed from the somewhat terrifying manner of the "Children of Adam," and he deserves highest rank among the emancipators of the world if only for the way in which he places Love in its natural setting of broad spaces and fresh open air and sweet revealing light. Garmented in simplicity and naturalness, it is the most beautiful and the most sacred thing in the whole round of life. Its natural issue in the mutual attraction and union of two, in fatherhood and motherhood, in friendship and social service, is the stream of life

flowing straight from divine sources. He insists that it must be passionate if it is to be pure. He would disentangle it from stuffy rooms and upholstery (Walt Whitman cried, "I swear I will never mention Love or Death inside a house") and lead it out into the fragrant bushy woods and under the stars. In every sense, it is pre-eminently a thing for the open. There must be a certain wildness about it, an abandon, an enthusiasm of acceptance and devotion. It is not a pastime, it is a career. It is not a toy, it is even as an agony of creation. It is not a game, it is a strife. It is not merely an occasion for marriage, it is the ultimate human sanctity. A man who refuses its call, for any selfish reason, is life's fool, nature's failure, and God's sorrow. A society which relegates it indoors, banishes it from its streets as shameless, puts a hand over its mouth and stifles its wild rapturous song, hedges it about with indecent proprieties, makes it impossible by its economic conditions for young healthy people to consummate love's purposes in the creative joy of parenthood, is inwardly rotten and under sentence of death. It is the basis of all morality. It is the meaning of all religion. In chanting its praises, Carpenter rises to heights of impassioned and inspiring poetry.

Not because thou art fair ;

Not because thine eyes glance winningly, nor because  
of the sly arch of thine eyebrows ;

Not because thy voice is like music played in the open air,

And thy coming like the dawn on the far-off mountains ;

Not because thou comest with the dance and the song,  
and because the flashing of thy feet is like the winds of Spring ;

Nor because thou art sweetly perfumed,

Do I praise thee.

Not because thy dwelling is among knights and ladies—afar from all that is common or gross ;

Not because thou delayest to the sound of playing fountains on marble terraces,

And white hands caress thee and clip thy wing-feathers,

And meek thoughts and blameless conversation attend thee ;

Not because thy place is among the flowers and the winecups in spacious halls,

And because the sight of Death appals thee ;

Nor because, love, thou art a child ;

But because as on me now, full-grown gigantesque out of the ground out of the common earth arising,

Very awful and terrible in heaven thou appearest ;

Because as thou comest to me in thy majesty sweeping over the world with lightnings and black darkness,

I am as a leaf borne, as a fragrance exhaled before thee,

As a bird crying singed by the prairie-fire ;

Because Thou rulest, O glorious, and before thee all else fails,

And at thy dread new command—at thy new word Democracy—the children of the earth and the sea and the sky find their voices, and the despised things come forth and rejoice ;

Because in thy arms, O strong one, I laugh Death to scorn—nay, I go forth to meet him with gladness ;

Ay, because thou takest away from me all strength but thine own,

Because thou takest all doubt and power of resistance,

\* Because out of disallowed and unaccepted things—and  
always out of these—full-armed and terrific,

Thou arisest—

Therefore, O love O flame wherein I burning die and  
am consumed, carried aloft to the stars a disembodied  
voice—

O dread Creator and Destroyer,

Do I praise Thee.<sup>1</sup>

It is characteristic of Carpenter, and in keeping with his fundamental idea, to see Love not only as the gentle companion of the hearth, but also atmosphered in the awe and splendour of royalty and divinity, imperious, majestic. Francis Thompson speaks of God as the “tremendous Lover,” and there is a passage in Carpenter’s poem, “Eternal Hunger,” which, by literary coincidence, contains the same idea as “The Hound of Heaven,” though written, of course, long before that superlatively splendid ode.

O love greater than all,

Over the mountains the forests and the seas,

Over the black chasm of death, in spectral haste

Thou ridest, and the hungry winds and waves

Are but Thy hounds ; Thou the eternal huntsman !<sup>2</sup>

We have now to consider the difficult and delicate questions of Sex and Marriage ; and it must be remembered that in all he says about these matters, Carpenter is seeking to render service to Love with a single-eyed and unswerving devotion. That Love may be enhanced and

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 169.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159.



glorified, known in the individual heart and enthroned in Society—this is his one aim. He writes frankly, but always “with pure heart fervently” as becomes a High Priest of this shrine.

The individual aspect of Love tends to centre round the facts of sex, “making love,” marriage, parenthood. Present-day society, having learned some wisdom through its sufferings, is beginning to assume an altogether healthier attitude towards these matters which lie central to the race-life. There is an increasing volume of demand that young people should be instructed in the sex-facts—a parental obligation more honoured in the breach than in the observance; sociological science is pushing the Church on one side and examining anew the validity of the institution of marriage and the social effects of the present conditions under which it exists; the remarkable development of the Eugenist movement is one of the signs of the times, to say nothing of the Feminist movement, which is likely to have a revolutionary influence upon all questions affecting the sex-relation.

In the earlier chapters of *The Drama of Love and Death* Carpenter appears as the author of a modern *Ars amatoris*, full of homely humour and cunning wisdom, a gentle and engaging guide to one who, in preparation for the great experience, would exercise himself that he may love wisely and well. He prefaces it by a chapter on

the "Beginnings of Love," in which he finds that, as studied in minute organisms, Love is "primarily an interchange of essences." This portion of the book—the only one that concerns us here—is exceedingly well done, and might, advantageously to myriads of young people, be reprinted (with some enlargement) as a separate volume.

It was in a much earlier book, *Love's Coming of Age*, the first edition of which appeared almost twenty years ago, that Carpenter—then almost a voice crying in the wilderness—dealt with the questions of Sex and Marriage.

Throughout this volume is evidenced that mixture of delicacy and directness, of gentleness and force, of "sweetness and light," which is the index everywhere to fineness and sincerity of feeling. It is possible to disagree, but impossible not to admire the skill, courage, taste, and earnestness with which the matter is presented. He is making a by no means popular utterance, but there can be no room for doubt that he writes in the cause of a pure and noble Love.

Sex, he says, is the allegory of Love in the physical world; <sup>1</sup> it is a manifestation of that desire for non-differentiation and absolute union of being which is the aim of Love throughout the Universe. The respective positions of man and woman in respect to it are qualitatively different: the fulfilment of sex is a relief and a condensation to the

<sup>1</sup> *Love's Coming of Age* (sixth edition), p. 20.

man. But to the woman it is the culmination of her life, her profound and secret mission to humanity, of incomparable import and delicacy.<sup>1</sup>

In the man, sex is an unorganized passion, an individual need or impetus ; but in woman it is a constructive instinct.<sup>2</sup> It is possible that there has always been excess and abuse of sex-love, but its degeneration began when woman fell to the position of man's serf or chattel. It waits for her emancipation that it may be restored, for woman " should be the interpreter of Love to man." <sup>3</sup>

The crux of the sex-problem on its social side is the position of woman. It will never be solved until woman is free.

Let every woman whose heart bleeds for the sufferings of her sex, hasten to declare herself and to constitute herself, so far as she possibly can, a free woman. Let her accept the term with all the odium that belongs to it ; let her insist on her right to speak, dress, think, act, and above all to use her sex, as she deems best ; <sup>4</sup>

for a vital constituent of woman's freedom will be the freedom to choose her man, freedom to give or to withhold herself. In our present society, sexual selection is determined by the man ; this is not likely to continue so for long ; and

it is possible that the more dignified and serious attitude of women towards sex may give to sexual selection when

<sup>1</sup> *Love's Coming of Age*, p. 37.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

exercised by them a nobler influence . . . nor is it difficult to imagine that the feminine influence might thus sway to the evolution of a more manly and dignified race.<sup>1</sup>

Sexual selection by the man has led to the production of three prominent types of woman in modern society<sup>2</sup>—the “lady, a mere dressed doll,” the household drudge, and the prostitute, both mondaine and demi-mondaine. Of the three, perhaps the last is the least remote from the proper dignity of womanhood. With the emancipation of woman to the point of an equal voice with man in sexual selection, these types might not disappear, but they would be submitted to extreme revaluation, and would be altogether dominated in social power and place by a new and grander type,

who, combining broad sense with sensibility, the passion for Nature with the love of Man, and commanding indeed the details of life, yet risen out of localism and convention, will help us to undo the bands of death which encircle the present society, and open the doors to a new and a wider life.<sup>3</sup>

And the children of these equal unions! No one has ever depicted, in language so beautiful in itself and so beautifully fitted to the emotion it expresses, the brooding desire of the mother over her wanted child as yet unborn, as Carpenter in the following lines:

<sup>1</sup> *Love's Coming of Age*, p. 65.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

I am amazed and troubled, my child, she whispers—at the thought of you ; I hardly dare to speak of it, you are so sacred ;

When I feel you leap I do not know myself any more—I am filled with wonder and joy—Ah ! if any injury should happen to you !

I will keep my body pure, very pure ; the sweet air will I breathe and pure water drink ; I will stay out in the open, hours together, that my flesh may become pure and fragrant for your sake ;

Holy thoughts will I think ; I will brood in the thought of mother-love. I will fill myself with beauty ; trees and running brooks shall be my companions ;

And I will pray that I may become transparent—that the sun may shine and the moon, my beloved, upon you, Even before you are born.<sup>1</sup>

A passage adequately complemented by the closing lines of “ The Babe ” :

And then the Babe ;

A tiny perfect sea-shell on the shore

By the waves gently laid (the awful waves !)—

By trembling hands received—a folded message—

A babe yet slumbering, with a ripple on its face

Remindful of the ocean.

And two twined forms that overbend it, smiling,

And wonder to what land Love must have journeyed,

Who brought this back—this word of sweetest meaning ;

Two lives made one, and visible as one.

And herein all Creation.<sup>2</sup>

This unveils an idyllic picture indeed ; and yet what proportion of usual marriages offer anything

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 92.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 424.



like the counterpart of it? It is no part of Carpenter's plan to abuse the institution of marriage. He sees clearly enough, however, that

as long as man is only half-grown, and woman is a serf or a parasite, it can hardly be expected that marriage should be particularly successful.<sup>1</sup>

Two people come together, knowing little of each other, and often under the delusive glamour of physical desire—this especially on the man's side. "To one the subject of sex is probably a sealed book, to the other perhaps a book whose most dismal page has been opened first. The man needs an outlet for his passion; the girl is looking for a 'home' and a proprietor."<sup>2</sup> They marry without misgivings, very light-heartedly. At a later hour they realise that a life-sentence has been passed upon them. When the novelty of the situation has worn off, and the excess of physical passion dissipated, their inner selves come to the surface, and they awake to find that they have not known each other. But it is too late. Nature wanted them for her purposes; the Law and the Church stepped in, and said, "Yes, but on our terms." Those terms are a legal and religion-sanctioned bond which cannot be broken without public damage and disgrace, "till death do you part." And the Church, which strangely allows almost everything else in Bible or Prayer-book to be interpreted in other than a literal

<sup>1</sup> *Love's Coming of Age*, p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

sense, will not permit that "death" here should signify that death of mutual interest and sympathy which sunders far more completely and bitterly than the physical catastrophe. They are bound. They are not twain, but simply coupled.

The monetary dependence of the woman, the mere sex-needs of the man, the fear of public opinion, all form motives, and motives of the meanest kind, for maintaining the seeming tie; and the relation of the two hardens down into a dull neutrality, in which lives and characters are narrowed and blunted, and deceit becomes the common weapon which guards divided interests.<sup>1</sup>

The situation presses most heavily upon the woman; "how bitterly alone such a woman feels!", her delusions shattered, her womanly dignity humiliated, yet dependent and unable to take the initiative in putting an end to it. Along with this goes—for tragedies do not come in spies but in battalions—the brutal physical demand of the husband on an unwilling wife (conjugal rights!), the unwanted child, the endless leading of a double life, and the creation of a type of family

too often like that which is disclosed when on turning over a large stone we disturb an insect Home that seldom sees the light.<sup>2</sup>

But an institution is not to be abandoned just because it happens to have a seamy side. It

<sup>1</sup> *Love's Coming of Age*, p. 75.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

would be idle to deny the educational value of the marriage-bond, or that it tends to concentrate affectional experience, or that it keeps two people together during a perhaps unavoidable period of strain and friction, and so gives them the opportunity of learning one of the best lessons of life— forbearance and gentleness ; or that, in itself, the existence of such a tie discredits the idea that mere pleasure is the object of the marriage association. Equally absurd would it be to deny that there are many happy marriages ; in the great majority of these cases, however, one knows that the union would have been just as real and permanent apart from the sanctions of State and Church. Love is the only marriage-maker ; and while, by common consent, our present marriage laws need to be reformed, the determining principle of such reform must be the completer realization of Love. Nothing ultimately will serve well the State which does disservice to Love.

Carpenter, indeed, does not seem to hope much from an alteration of the law in relation to marriage. He looks rather to the gradual emancipation of woman, already spoken of, which will effect profound and subtle changes in the marriage relation ; and these the law will in the end be compelled to recognise.

It is evident that no very great change for the better in marriage-relations can take place except as the accompaniment of deep-lying changes in Society at large ; and that alterations in the law alone will effect but a

limited improvement. More likely is it that, underneath the law, the common practice will slide forward into newer customs.<sup>1</sup>

What these "newer customs" will be is difficult to foresee. The drift will almost certainly be towards greater freedom; Love may give pledges, but can never without self-hurt and contradiction demand promises, and no contract has ever been framed that could bind Love. So long, however, as formal contracts are considered necessary (with regard particularly to property and to children) they should tend to lose

their irrevocable and rigid character, and become in some degree adapted to the needs of the contracting parties.<sup>2</sup>

It is commonly imagined that reform in matters such as these must come always along the somewhat arid and unromantic line of scientific inquiries, sociological statistics, royal commissions, and legislation embodying the conclusions so reached. This is to miss the real beginnings of things. A new reform is worthless save in so far as it registers a new vision, a new feeling, a new attitude on the part of the people as a whole. To create and establish this is the first thing. Modern society needs to be quickened by the warning which Carpenter utters in an allegorical poem, "I saw a Fair House," in which he depicts the mistress of the house sitting alone amidst its

<sup>1</sup> *Love's Coming of Age*, p. 111.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

beauties and utilities, its well-set tables, and its numerous servants—alone and weeping. And why ?

And she answered, Indeed I long to go down into the world, but I may not ; no sooner do I show the face of Love than I am execrated as one forbidden and an out-cast. For in this city so long as one remains within one's house one may do there what meanness and selfishness one will, provided one keeps fair the front of the house ; but to go forth openly and share one's life and the gladness of life with others, that is not permitted.

And I said, It is a strange city.

And I went out and walked through the streets ; but gloom and sadness reigned, and only in some houses the noise of feasting and debauchery, and in others a sound of weeping.<sup>1</sup>

There must arise a new sentiment with respect to our bodies and their functions—that the former, redolent with health and vibrant with passion, are the most beautiful of all divine creations, and that the latter are essentially pure and sacred. Men must recapture the ancient sense of the high value, even the religious value, of athletic fitness and restraint with a view to physical and emotional purity and power, regulating to this end their eating and drinking. Discussions of the sex question must no longer be confined to laboratory and class-room, must be banished from the secret, and often unclean, conversations of one-sexed coteries in smoking-room and drawing-room, and take a natural place in the friendly and serious

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 427.



intercourse of men and women who will speak of them with simplicity, without shame, and as equals in dignity, knowledge, desire, and race-love. Even through the heavy and fuliginous atmosphere of commercialism, the vision must be caught again of Love adorable and omnipotent, supreme in worth and splendour, the one real thing in all the world, most precious and desirable, Aphrodite once more rising from the waves of the sea.

It is probable that the reason why, in these days, the social consciousness is disturbed and solicitous about the questions of sex and marriage is because somehow or other Love is being wronged herein and dispossessed of its "crown rights." "Except Love build the house, they labour in vain that build it." If the right feeling can be restored in the hearts of men and women still capable of giving it habitation and allegiance, legislation and reform will follow necessarily and effectively. In these matters again, therefore, Carpenter is less a reformer than he is a revealer and a re-valuer.

Thus far, individual Love has been regarded as lying only between persons of different sex ; but no account of the phenomena of Love would be complete which did not recognise that a profound and even passionate affection may, and frequently does, exist between persons of the same sex. It has the same exalting, purifying, redeeming effects here, although it is less focussed, more suffused ;

it hallows friendship, sanctifies brotherly service, haloes lowly manhood with a divine nimbus, works largeness and deliverance, brings joy out of despair and life out of death by a self-forgetful, self-sacrificing comradeship. Carpenter celebrates it in that lovely story, almost obviously a transcript from real life, in which he tells of the tailor,<sup>1</sup>

Cross-legged in a low tailor's den, gasping for breath—

The gas flaring, doors and windows tight shut, the thick, sick atmosphere ;    {

The men in their shirt-sleeves, with close heat from the stove, and smell of sweat and of the cloth ;

Stitching, stitching, twelve hours a day . . .

With sore eyes, sick sick at heart, and furious.

He is a common man, but he has a soul ; and his soul hungers for freedom, for life, for love.

A little fire burns in his heart, burns night and day :  
The slow pain kills—no Love.

So weary is he with the struggle for existence, with his filthy den, with the obscene talk in his ears, and with his gnawing soul-hunger, that he sickens. The doctor says that it is his heart, and advises rest. For a few days he rests, but, feeling no better, and thinking that perhaps to die were on the whole better, he goes back to work again.

When, as it happened—and this was strangest of all—quite suddenly, the most unexpected thing in the world,

To a casual little club which once a week he was in the habit of attending, there came one night a new member,

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 280.

Of athletic strength and beauty, yet gentle in his manners,

And with a face like a star—so stedfast, clear and true that he, the sufferer, felt renewed by merely looking on it.

But what was even more strange, the newcomer turning spoke friendly to him, and soon seemed to understand,

And from that time forward came and companioned and nursed him, and stayed whole nights and days with him, and loved him.

And out of his despair there grew something so glorious that he forgets it not, night nor day ;

Great waves of health and strength come to him—as to a man who after the long Arctic night bathes in the warmth and light of the re-arisen sun ;

Even the wretched tailor's den is transformed ; but soon leaving that he accepts by preference the poorest work in the open under heaven,

And breathes again, and tastes the sweet air afresh ;

And watches a new sun rise in the morning, and a new transparency among the stars at night ;

And the body grows strong and hardy, and the little heart gathers and knits itself together,

And sings, sings, sings,

Sings all day to its friend whether present or absent.

This will serve as a point of transition to that peculiar aspect of social love—the “love of comrades,”—of which Walt Whitman is the prophet in the modern world. Carpenter has given expression to it in *Iolaüs, an Anthology of Friendship*, and in such poems as “The Elder Soldier to the Younger,”<sup>1</sup> “Philolaus to Diocles.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 277.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 413.

But, forsaking these inspirational heights for a moment, he has written a book, *Intermediate Types among Primitive Folk*, in which he gives in succinct and popular form the results of such investigations as have been made, chiefly by continental psychologists and anthropologists, concerning what is commonly known as the Uranian type, its characteristics and its place in social development. It may be said at once that he not only popularises these results, adding original suggestions of his own, but also places the whole subject on a higher plane than that of the clinical laboratory, touches it with romance, and, as is his wont, deals with it that Love may be glorified. What is the "intermediate sex"?

In human physiology, sex is clearly differentiated, though even on this plane there are intermediate types; but in human psychology the sex-characteristics are not nearly so stable. There are men who, psychologically, are more women than men; and there are women who, similarly, are more men than women. In some cases—and it is held by many observers that their number is rapidly on the increase—the masculine and feminine elements in psychological make-up are so equally balanced that they show an intermediate psychological type which is sometimes compared with the "neuters" in the beehive.

Usually there is a high degree of sympathy between physiological sex and psychological sex; and notoriously there are many men and women



who are colourless, so to speak, and passionless from the sex point of view. Where, however, there is discrepancy between the physiology and the psychology of an individual, we get the phenomenon of sex-inversion.

It is probable that these intermediate types have played a larger and more important part in the religious and social development of the race than is commonly realised. For example, there is considerable ground for believing that in early times the prophets and the priests were largely recruited from this class. For it is consistent with the primitive habit of argument that a peculiarity which distinguished a man from among his fellows should be attributed to some kind of divine possession. A man who, because of his peculiar psychological condition, displayed no desire or aptitude for the manly pursuits of hunting and fighting, but either consorted with the women or, strangely isolated from his sex, went brooding about alone on the hills and in the woods, watching the stars, turning his own thoughts over and over in his mind, was not (as we might at first suppose) despised among the people, but came rather to be regarded, just because of his extraordinary manner of living, as a supernatural being and a person of consequence. Perhaps it would be truer to say that at first he was despised and rejected of the men, but that in course of time, evidencing special and not unserviceable powers—as would be likely



enough not only because of his feminine faculty of intuition and intimate understanding, but also because of his knowledge of weather-signs and herbs picked up in his solitary wanderings—he came to be held in high esteem and treated with divine honours.

In a poem, “O Child of Uranus,”<sup>1</sup> Carpenter describes this type :

O child of Uranus, wanderer down all times,  
Darkling, from farthest ages of the Earth the same  
Strange tender figure, full of grace and pity,  
Yet outcast and misunderstood of men—  
Thy Woman-soul within a Man's form dwelling,  
So gentle, gracious, dignified, complete,  
With man's strength to perform, and pride to suffer  
without sign,  
And feminine sensitiveness to the last fibre of being ;  
Strange twice-born, having entrance to both worlds—  
Loved, loved by either sex,  
And free of all their lore !  
Lord of the love which rules this changing world,  
Passing all partial loves, this one complete—  
I see thee where for centuries thou hast walked,  
Lonely, the world of men,  
Saving, redeeming, drawing all to thee,  
Yet outcast, slandered, pointed of the mob,  
Misjudged and crucified.  
Dear Son of Heaven—long-suffering wanderer through  
the wilderness of civilization—  
The day draws nigh when from these mists of ages  
Thy form in glory clad shall reappear.

Among primitive peoples there is but little

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 410.

differentiation between the functions of prophet, priest, wizard, and witch-doctor ; the " medicine-man " is said to be the predecessor of both king and priest ; and rapidly accumulating evidence goes to show that he was usually of this intermediate type.

While the homosexual person has this conspicuous place in the history and development of religion—and not in primitive times alone—a place not less prominent must be given to him (and to her) in the development also of social life. They appear as the inventors of the arts and crafts. In early societies the normal men are occupied with the chase and with battle, the normal women with the home, family, and agriculture ;

but when the man came along who did not want to fight—who was perhaps more inclined to run away—and who did not particularly care about hunting, he necessarily discovered some other interest and occupation—composing songs or observing the qualities of herbs or the procession of the stars. Similarly with the women who did not care about house-work and child-rearing. The non-warlike men and the non-domestic women, in short, sought new outlets for their energies. They sought different occupations from those of the quite ordinary man and woman—as in fact they do today ; and so they became the initiators of new activities. They became students of life and nature, inventors and teachers of arts and crafts, or wizards and sorcerers ; they became diviners and seers, or revealers of the gods and religion ; they became medicine-men and healers, prophets and prophetesses, and so ultimately laid the

foundation of the priesthood, of science, literature, and art.<sup>1</sup>

Among some more developed races this Uranian temperament found a quite different outlet—notably among the Dorian Greeks, and the Samurai of Japan. It led to the formation of military comradeship, which “bred ideals of heroism, courage, resource, and endurance among the men, and exalted these virtues into the highest place of public honour.”<sup>2</sup> This peculiar relation, often purely passionate and not inverted in sex-character, existed usually between an elder soldier and a younger; it was publicly recognized; the elder might represent the younger in public assemblies, and could be punished for his faults; in times of peace, the elder was to his friend as a model and pattern of life; he was guide, philosopher, and friend; he concerned himself with the youth’s training for all manly efficiency; and was his encourager in all public ambitions. In times of war, they fought side by side,<sup>3</sup> urging each other to heroic deeds, and faithfully defending each other (even unto death) in moments of stress, wounding, and defeat. It cannot be doubted—the Theban Band is the classic in-

<sup>1</sup> *Intermediate Types*, p. 58.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.

<sup>3</sup> An interesting revival of this took place in the vigorous recruiting in England for “Kitchener’s Army” (1914), volunteers being urged to enlist in pairs, or small groups, of friends.

stance—that a company composed after this fashion of lovers, each rejoicing to be bold and brave in the other's eyes, each ready at need to lay down his life for the friend, would have its effectiveness as a fighting unit increased manifold.

The elaborate mechanism of modern warfare renders a revival of this ancient custom on any large scale impossible; nor is it necessary; for among civilized peoples the disastrous occasions on which appeal has to be made to this "dread arbitrament" tend to become fewer in number. But while the clash of battle may be gradually transferred<sup>1</sup> from the high seas and the broad acres, to the offices of diplomatists and the courts of arbitration, every community has to confront internal enemies in the form of ignorance and selfishness and established wrongs; and it was because Walt Whitman appreciated the glamour, strength, nobility, and effectiveness of the ancient Dorian Friendship, because he knew that when two persons love each other with a passionate affection transcending the plane on which sex, as usually understood, operates, there is with them That which is the only solvent of human ills, the only triumphant leader of human progress, That with which alone is the kingdom and the power and the glory, that he cried out his resolve

<sup>1</sup> This hope remains in spite of, is even strengthened because of, the terrible European lapsus in 1914.

not to rest until he had established "in these States the institution of the love of comrades."

This chapter, condensed as it is, covers a wide field. This was necessary, since Love is the key to all the treasures that are in earth and heaven. All the characteristic words in Carpenter's teaching—cosmic consciousness, freedom, equality, democracy—must come at last to be thought of and interpreted in terms of Love; and Love, not in some special sense, but as the ordinary man understands it, and is able to feel it. All human love is the outshining of Love Divine, and what heart has been touched by this beam and has not been lifted up out of its narrowness and meanness, purified of its stains and dross, delivered from fear and from evil, burned pure, and made great? All the great words of religion must come finally to be interpreted in terms of it; for Love is the Redeemer, Atoner, Reconciler, Justifier, Sanctifier, Judge, and Saviour. Democracy is the love-kingdom first in the heart, and then issuing into social organization. . . . The worlds have been created by it; we ourselves are born at its bidding; we measure the ascent of our lives by the degree in which Love, like a flame, touches our powers and transmutes them into itself; it is our common solace in the hour of Death, liberating us from its dread, giving intimations of immortality and the sense of a union transcending all mortal change.



Indeed thou art so deep within my heart,  
I fear not Death. And though I die, and fail,  
Falling through stupors, senselessness, oblivion,  
Down to the roots of being ; still, thou art there.  
I shall but sleep, as I have slept before,  
So oft, in dreamless peace, close-linked with thee.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 416.

## CHAPTER X

### EQUALITY

“ To love one’s neighbour in the immovable depths means to love in others that which is eternal ; for one’s neighbour, in the truest sense of the term, is that which approaches the nearest to God ; in other words, all that is best and purest in man ; and it is only by ever lingering near the gates I spoke of, that you can discover the divine in the soul.”—  
MAETERLINCK, *The Treasure of the Humble*.

#### ARGUMENT

*Equality does not consist in sameness, or in uniformity. Men who are unequal in ability, may yet be equal in service, since of this the community-life requires all kinds. The true equality lies deeper than this, and arises from the fact that a Whole expresses itself in each part in a particular way. Carpenter defines Equality as a plane of consciousness from which the universal element is perceived in each individual. The Law of Equality is that in accordance with which a man gives himself lovingly away on all sides, and by thus sharing the self-life with each is united with all. The life of such a man expands in all directions underneath the outward structure of society, and feeds the roots of other lives ; the experience, also, becomes strength in him since his own life is deepened*

*and enlarged, and he escapes thereby the tyranny of external gains.*

THE last three chapters have been occupied with certain special kinds of experience—Pain, Moral Effort, Love—which mediate the birth of Freedom in the soul;—Freedom or, as it has been here described, Consciousness in the Second Unity, being one of three main characteristics of the inward Democracy. With another of these characteristics, cosmic emotionalism (or Consciousness in the third Unity), we have also dealt; and there remains the third, which is the subject of this chapter, Equality (or Consciousness in the First Unity).

Equality is a common, but an elusive, word. It is not easily defined; and, so far as defined, most people fight shy of the idea of it. It seems to be of the flimsiest stuff that dreams are made of, and they fear to introduce it into contact with actual life. They think of it as a strange jet of idealistic enthusiasm which was flung up from the depths in the lurid disturbances of the French Revolution; or as a somewhat sinister claim made by those who have not and would like to have. Others blunt the keen edge of the word by explaining it in some such phrase as "equality of opportunity," but this is rather an obscuration than a solution of the problem.

Certain things may be ruled out at once.

Equality, for example, is not sameness. It is not a mathematical equality. That two persons should be equal does not mean that they should each be the "double" (in any sense) of the other. The presence of equality is, as in the case of the leaves of a tree, compatible with a complete absence of sameness. Two people are not equal as two bricks may be equal in measurement, weight, quality—if only for the reason that society is a structure, not a heap.

Neither is it mechanical equality. There is a tendency in the elaboration of organization in some sections of a modern community to produce a kind of machine-made man; to standardize individuals; to approximate them to mere items in a mechanism, so that one may be substituted for another like screws. Here is an equality which is something like sameness; but precisely here is something which is profoundly contradictory and destructive of manhood and life.

Equality, again, is not uniformity. It is not something produced by a levelling process, either up or down. The phrase a "dead level" is suggestive. A tree may be pruned to a certain shape, but in a week's time the artificial outline will be destroyed. It is not possible to level a living thing. Uniformity implies the use of a mould under pressure; to some extent the quenching and crushing out of individuality. No sane reformer is working for such an end as this. No

true vision of life offers such a view as this. If men could be passed through some sort of machine—say, a particular type of education—so as to come out compressed into a uniform shape, there is an original and irresistible force dwelling at the centre of every individual which would either shatter or distort the pattern into which it had been moulded. A man's signature naturally plays mischief with copperplate. As Emerson said, every man who is worthy of the name is a nonconformist. He will not be coerced into a pattern. Many men are extraordinarily patient, submissive, docile ; they willingly suffer many limitations in the interests of what appears to be the common good ; but there is a limit to the limitations. There is a boundary to the dominion of organization. There is a term to sufferance. When that term is reached, sooner or later, the situation becomes intolerable, and the mildest of men finds himself nonconformist, revolutionary, *malgré soi*. All of which is obviously healthy, lifeward.

Equality is not to be found in externals ; nor in those internal qualities, either, which are more immediately manifested and perceived. Equality, for example, is not equality in ability. If individuals were to be completely stripped of all covering things, things externally attached—houses, lands, possessions, body—they would not appear as so many transparent spheres of mind-stuff (let us say) precisely equal in size, capacity,



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quality, texture. In these deeper areas are still differences. There are great souls, and mean souls ; souls of fine texture, and souls of coarse texture ; there are men of extraordinary spiritual vision, and men who have practically no spiritual vision at all ; men who are expansive, explosive, centres of moral and spiritual force, and others who are passive and inert. There are men of such great soul that they triumph gloriously over the most unfavourable conditions, giants who carry their very fetters with dignity. Bunyan, in a tinker's shop ; Carey, in a cobbler's leathern apron ; Mazzini in a garret ; Ibsen or Boehmen, for months and years living from hand to mouth ;—their name is legion ;—such as these cannot be spoken of as being in any sense on the same level of vision, spiritual capacity, moral quality, with the tens of thousands of lesser men and women who own them as masters and guides.

In what sense, then, can equality be predicted of men and women so diverse in place, function, gift, capacity, ability, whose distinct individuality seems to be of the very essence of their being, and whose mutual differences are necessary in the social unity ?

Browning came almost within sight of the answer when he wrote,

All service ranks the same with God—  
With God, whose puppets best and worst  
Are we ; there is no last nor first.

“ Puppets ” is not good ; it suggests the me-

chanical equality which we have excluded, and a dead level of personal insignificance. A poet of Browning's order, however, must not be taken up on a word, and the general thought in the lines is true. We are all equal in the sense that we have each a place and a function within the Whole, and each of us functioning in our place is necessary to the Whole. There is no external equality between the great muscle which flexes the fighting arm, and the tiny muscle which moves the eyelid or compresses the tear-gland ; yet, on the plane of service, each is made equal to the other by the body's need of each ; and this is capable of practical proof, since the fighting arm would not be of much service if the due compression of the tear-gland did not keep the eye clear. The pieces on a chess-board are unequal in value, as they stand ; but for the purposes of the combination by which the master makes a bid for victory, each piece and pawn in the combination is on an equality, in the sense that the combination as a movement works equally through each, and apart from the exercise of the position and capacity of each at its fullest the combination will break down.

All service is not the same ; neither, if one type of service is artificially isolated from another and compared with it in range and effect, is all service equal ; common sense could not hold that the ploughman is, when so judged, equal to the poet ; but all service " ranks the same " from

the point of view of the Whole ; and this, not simply because (as Browning saw) the fulfilment of the plan of the Whole requires the functioning of each part in its place, but because the natural necessary effort and expression of each individual is the Whole itself functioning in him in a particular way.

It is this latter, and profounder, idea which provides the feeling- and the thought-content in Carpenter's conception of Equality. It is consciousness within the first Unity — the organic membership of individuals in the community ; it arises when the individual, detaching himself and withdrawing somewhat from the surface planes of intense self-consciousness, escaping in this fashion the boundaries of self-hood which define his position and character in the outer world, awakes to find himself in that spiritual continuum which everywhere underlies the structure of society, " swimming," as Carpenter graphically expresses it, " in the Ocean of Equality," and becomes aware of his indissoluble, real, necessary union at those depths with all.

This consciousness in the first Unity, attained as an actual experience perhaps only fitfully and fleetingly, nevertheless determines the practice of life towards the formation of a peculiarly sympathetic, friendly, understanding, loving habit and attitude in respect of others. In a marginal note on some manuscript belonging to the present writer, Carpenter has described Equality as " another

plane from which you look down on all as equals, or it is a Sun which from within radiates equally on all." It is well known that one can see deeper beneath the surface of the sea from a balloon than from a boat ; and the experience under discussion here constitutes, as it were, an elevated plane of vision wherefrom all are seen to be equal, not because from that height differences become insignificant, but because the inner and underneath reality of each and all is seen. To habituate one's self to this attitude, to turn the experience into an active principle of social conduct, is to live according to the " Law of Equality." Carpenter has a poem with this title ;<sup>1</sup> it is characteristic, nor is it difficult if the distinction be borne in mind between the superficial impermanent self and the deeper more inward self which is more social than individual in character.

Whatever you appropriate to yourself now from others,  
by that you will be poorer in the end ;

What you give now, the same will surely come back  
to you.

If you think yourself superior to the rest, in that  
instant you have proclaimed your own inferiority ;

And he that will be servant of all, helper of most, by  
that very fact becomes their lord and master.

Seek not your own life—for that is death ;

But seek how you can best and most joyfully give  
your own life away—and every morning for ever fresh  
life shall come to you from over the hills.



Man has to learn to die—quite simply and naturally—as the child has to learn to walk.

A little while snatching to yourself the goods of the earth, jealous of your own credit, and of the admiration and applause of men,

Then to learn that you cannot defeat Nature so . . .

The claims of others as good as yours, their excellence in their own line equal to your best in yours, their life as near and dear to you as your own can be.

So letting go all the chains which bound you, all the anxieties and cares,

The wearisome burden, the artificial unyielding armour wherewith you would secure yourself, but which only weighs you down a more helpless mark for the enemy—

To pass out, free, O joy!—free, to flow down, to swim in the sea of Equality—

To endue the bodies of the divine Companions,  
And the life which is eternal.

The impression here given of this way of life is that it consists in giving one's self away to this one and to that, to as many as possible, in every direction; sharing, spreading one's self here and there; entering into this heart and into that; forming personal love-contacts in many places; so allowing one's life to expand, as oil poured into many vessels from a cruse that fails not, until one's self appears to be but the focus of a wide area within which many other lives are, partially or wholly, embraced and gathered. Of such a one, Carpenter says that his heart is

like Nature's garden, that all men abide in.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 183.



And, contemplating mortal death, which is but the similitude in the material world of the manifold deaths to the outer self whereby the inner self is liberated, he sings,

Methinks that when the world fades my little heart  
shall grow,  
And grow and grow into another World,  
And be my Paradise where I shall find  
My lovers, and they me, for evermore.<sup>1</sup>

In strict accordance with this standpoint, Carpenter praises the common, the average, as opposed to the exceptional (which usually gets the world's praise). The average is tinged with the universal. He praises it because it is at the roots of things, like "the undistinguished old earth! the dusty clods!"<sup>2</sup>

Far around and beyond whatever is exceptional and illustrious in human life stretches that which is average and unperceived;

All distinctions, all attainments, all signal beauty, skill, wit, and whatever a man can exhibit in himself, swim and are lost in that great ocean.

The subtle learning of the learned, the beauty of the exceptionally beautiful, the wit of the witty, the fine manners and customs of the courtly—all these things proceed immediately out of the common and undistinguished people and those who stand in direct contact with Nature, and return into them again.<sup>3</sup>

But, beyond this, it is obvious that the exceptional man stands somewhat at a disadvantage,

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 506.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

in that his exceptionality cuts him off from facile and free entry into the common life. His exceptional wealth, or learning, or position, constitute hedges about him ; few can get near to him, and he can get near to few only. It is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of Equality. Men of high rank feel this so strongly that they go incognito to share the lives, and enter into the experience, of the average people. A man's possessions become as walls shutting him out from the world-life. To the extent that a man is exceptional, he is constantly in the public eye, watched, reported, expected to do justice to his exceptionality ; this reacts on him and tends to make him artificial ; however much he may want to, he cannot let his life flow freely forth and mingle with the life of others about him. On the other hand, the average undistinguished man is unobserved, unprevented, he can mix easily with the crowd, he can without risk or damage " give himself away," he can go here, there, and everywhere, and enter into all kinds of experience, enjoy life with *naïveté* and naturalness, make many acquaintances, giving and receiving freely without pose and enforced pretension. The less he possesses, the more he enjoys. He goes along his way, finds something pleasant, human, good on either hand ; takes it, accepts it, gives himself up to it. Everywhere " he gives the sign of Equality." <sup>1</sup> He, to a degree scarcely

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 42.

ever possible to the exceptional man, comes to know himself ; for

the medium in which the knowledge of Yourself subsists is Equality.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps, pressing towards the logical issue of his principles with boldness, as is his wont, Carpenter ever and anon delivers himself of a hard saying which, at first sound, not only mystifies but repels. He has said,

If I am not level with the lowest I am nothing ; and if I did not know for a certainty that the craziest sot in the village is my equal ; and were not proud to have him walk with me as my friend ; I would not write another word—for in this is my strength.<sup>2</sup>

That seems to be a *reductio ad absurdum* of Equality ; yet, if the first principle as described in this chapter is admitted, this saying is simply and beautifully true. To become more inwardly free, is to love more and with less discrimination of outward things. The outward things which make a man “ the craziest sot in the village ” cease at last altogether to stand in the way. For, in the first place, the friend sees beneath these externalities—imperfections, idiosyncrasies, vices, sins—to the slumbering imprisoned possibility of manhood like his own. Recognizing that, he no longer turns from it in pride or shame or disgust, but begins to draw towards it in love. And there is more than this. If the love-life—

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 37.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

or by whatever other name the underneath spiritual reality is named—is rising into self-expression through each part and fragment of humanity, lifting lower levels up with it as it comes to its glory, it will be likely to find differences in the things that obstruct it and resist it ; for “ human material ” is no more homogeneous than the earth crust. In some soils it is easy for the seed to grow ; in others it is hard ; there is the rock pressing close upon it, the heavy clod, the impervious clay, the baked earth. Yet it puts out its shoots and grows valiantly on, seeking upward to the light. In some individuals the love-life finds an almost open course ; all men would be glad to acknowledge such their equals ; there is little resistance ; it is soon at the surface blossoming in the light. In others, the love-soul has a harder task, bears a heavier burden ; there is a terrible knot of dark resisting things at the point where it is pushing upwards to manifestation, a clod of dull stupidity, a mass of sensually vibrant flesh. Yet the labour cannot be refused. The lower the life-levels within which it is buried, the harder for love to lift them, to transmute them ; but it is there to subject all things unto itself.<sup>1</sup> Outwardly, he is the “ craziest sot in the village,” inwardly the human situation at that point is more like this—the love-soul down among the very depths, buried beneath heavy encrustations (so that it is scarcely ever visible, most rarely if

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Maeterlinck's *Mystical Morality*.



ever gives a hint of its presence), bearing the pressure, often baffled, waiting, lifting, working, slowly and by unknown ways redeeming.

And, if it be true that power develops under resistance, maybe the heavier the resistance over which the love-power ultimately triumphs, the higher and more perfect its development. The brightest radiance and the most glorious strength of the final love-kingdom may arise from just that place where, amid the most intractable material, in the blind and tragic depths of the soul of a "crazy sot," the love-life suffered and endured.

A thought like this suddenly changes the whole point of view, and disorganizes the received table of values. It puts the "world's coarse thumb and finger" out of joint. Familiar demarcations vanish, established class-divisions lose their usual definiteness of outline; old boundaries begin to fade away, and rough-and-ready moral distinctions grow faint. It is as when, having placed some object near to the eye and looked directly at it, one retains it in that position, keeps it in the field of vision, but focusses the sight at a point beyond it; so, still keeping individuals before us, but concentrating attention on some point behind and beyond them, looking through and past them to the "region of Equality," how differently they appear, how their sharp outlines seem to break down somewhat and fringe away into the equal background, how their outward-



nesses become transparent as if by reason of a light shining through from behind, how differently we understand them, feel about them, judge them! This way of looking at individuals is the true way; we come to a right knowledge of them when we see them in the medium of Equality. It is possible sometimes to stand on the kerb in a thronged and busy street and, becoming partially detached from the multitudinous visible details, to see, as if it were with some more inward organ of vision, not a jostling many-itemed crowd but one continuous stream of life in which the individuals appear to be as figured patterns and shapes on the surface. The millionaire is there, and the gamin, the idler and the worker, the judge and the criminal, the hunter and the hunted, the oppressor and his victim; but the one stream of life flowing through and beneath and around them strangely unites them. So it is possible to gain, for a moment or two, a somewhat aloof, elevated standpoint—always more inward to the Self—from which, as from a mountain-top, society, and all the kingdoms of the world, are spread out below there; to see the whole in continuity; to see it not as a superficial multiform structure, full of dividing lines and inequalities (as if these were the real and ultimate things), but as the mutable, imperfect, and progressive manifestation in outward forms of an immutable and perfect love-kingdom ever ascending, ever creating, destroying,

and recreating its body ; and then, having realized this for a moment, suddenly to get back to one's own place within it, and thereafter to remember that the truth about one's Self and about all other Selves is a twofold nature, outwardly belonging to the order which is temporary, and highly differentiated, inwardly belonging to the one life which is eternal, and profoundly unified.

This vision is the vision of Equality ; this, the experience of Equality ; and to be obedient, in one's relations to others, to this perceived Truth of things is to live according to the law of Equality.

Who shall be that spirit of deep fulfilment,  
Himself self-centred ; yet evermore from that centre  
Over the world expanding, along all creatures  
Loyally passing—with love, in perfect equality ? <sup>1</sup>

And “ herein is my strength.” For this inward movement which issues in the experience of Equality, the Consciousness in the first unity, plants the roots of personal life deeper, delivers a man from the tyranny of greed and the lust of external gains, secures him from the harassing and exhausting oppositions and struggles of the merely competitive existence, since, in equal union with all, he does not lose by that which another takes into his possession, and gains by that which others win or receive.

The same movement unites the individual with other lives in all directions, not so much as link

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 184.

is joined to link by an external bond, but by the actual spreading and extension of the self-life, its intimate mingling with other lives near and far, so that the Self expanding on all sides and running continuous underneath great areas of social structure acquires the stability and immunity of the Ocean itself which is not shifted from its place or moved in its depths by the storms, hurricanes, and weather-changes that temporarily affect its surface.

Further, it makes the individual more potently organic with that immanent love-kingdom, that spiritual Democracy, which, though it be called a Dream or a Vision, is the one substantial Reality operating within and through the race-life.

No volcano bursting up through peaceful pastures is a greater revolution than this ;

No vast mountain chain thrown out from ocean depths to form the primitive streak of a new continent looks farther down the future ;

For this is lava springing out of the very heart of Man ;

This is the upheaval of heaven-kissing summits whose streams shall feed the farthest generations,

This is the draft and outline of a new creature,

The forming of the wings of Man beneath the outer husk—

The outspread pinions of Equality, whereon arising he shall at last lift himself over the Earth, and launch forth to sail through Heaven.<sup>1</sup>

How often, and in what “divers tones,” it

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 265.

has been said that union is strength ; yet, so errant is the human will from the ways of knowledge, that the things have been chiefly praised which lift a man above his fellows, set him high up and apart in the isolated and exceptional place ; and even where, in modern days, union is sought it is mainly thought of as something which is to be attained by the external bonds of political alliances, commercial treaties, preferential tariffs, the mechanism of trade organizations, and the like. These are well in their way ; but Carpenter's reminder is in season, that they are futile and insignificant save in so far as they are correlated with, and at least partially expressive of, a deeper conscious union, lying beneath all temporary and class interests, born of spiritual insight, sympathy, and obedience.

This union, which lies within the scope of the individual heart even now, and is to be first clearly recognized and faithfully realized therein before ever it can create adequate organic form in society, is union *in excelsis*. It is the apprehension and experience of Equality.

And Thou above all ;  
Thou, gracious Presence, sweet enfolding me  
Far far within, touching me nearest of all,  
As through so many ages men and women Thou with  
the sweetness of thy love hast ravished ;  
So I touch them through Thee—through Thee to all  
I am come nearer now.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 328.

## CHAPTER XI

### CRITICISM OF CIVILIZATION

#### ARGUMENT

*Between a lower unity and a higher there is of necessity a stage of disintegration. So does Civilization lie between the primitive communism of the Gens, and the "finished, free, Society." It presents the features of disease, for disease is the decomposition of that unity wherein consists the health of the body.*

*Civilization arises out of Barbarism under the influence of the institution of Private Property; progress then begins, but social inequalities, injustices, wrongs begin also. These must be denounced and fought, but with due recognition of the fact that this warfare and clash of interests and ideals makes possible the arrival of the true conception of Individuality, and looks towards the re-fusion of developed Selves into a higher social order.*

*In the abstract sense, Civilization is continuous and (with ebb and flow) always proceeds; in the concrete sense, civilizations are interim stages between lower and higher unities.*

We find ourselves to-day in the midst of a somewhat peculiar state of society, which we call civilization, which even to the most optimistic among us does not seem



altogether desirable. Some of us, indeed, are inclined to think that it is a kind of disease which the various races of man have to pass through. . . .<sup>1</sup>

WITH these words opens a small volume entitled *Civilization: its Cause and Cure*, published first in 1889, and now in its twelfth edition. It is not improbable that Edward Carpenter is to a large number of people known only as an exceedingly foolish, though somewhat amusing, person, who is alleged to have said that Civilization is a disease.

The above quotation shows what he actually does say; and since, as may have been already gathered, he is not a foolish person, it will be well to attempt to discover what he intends by this somewhat startling criticism.

The Christian Bible opens and closes with a vision, in each of which human beings are disclosed existing in a state of perfection and felicity. The intervening pages contain a fascinating and most memorable history of struggle and agony, alternating success and failure, hope and despair. It is clear that, although all states of perfection are strangely otiose, the content of the latter (the New Jerusalem) is of a higher quality than that of the former (the Garden of Eden). For example, the innocence of the Garden has become the holiness of the City.

It is represented, indeed, as if there were no necessity inherent in the nature of things that

<sup>1</sup> *Civilization: its Cause and Cure* (Twelfth Edition), p. 1.

the Garden of Eden should have been left behind ; the movement away from it sprang out of an act of disobedience ; the whole structure of orthodox Christian theology rests upon this reading of the situation. The question is eminently arguable, but for illustrative purposes it is sufficient to take the facts as given, and to say that the passage from a lower to a higher order of perfection is mediated by the intrusion into the former of Something—symbolised by the Serpent—which disorganises the unity existing at the first level, introduces opposition and ferment, breeds discord and evil, and, as it works itself out, gives rise to pain, suffering, the sense of division and alienation, delusive wandering, the consciousness of sin. Through this strife and strain the higher order is reached ; and it is a higher order because the intermediate heat and pressure have served to develop dormant possibilities and powers, to disclose new principles, which did not manifest in the lower order and could not have done so long as its conditions persisted inviolate.

The Serpent has received several interpretations. Let us say here that it stands for Individualism. For what are the facts ? The writings of anthropologists (e.g. Reclus, Hall, Rink, Boas) furnish us with examples of small localised races, discovered lying remote from the main track of world-movement, say, within or near the Arctic Circle ; as, for example, the Eskimos and the

Chukchees. These peoples are found to possess an almost perfect communistic system: they hold all things in common; the fisherman or the hunter has private property in his weapons and tools, but that is all; and when the needs of himself and his family have been satisfied out of his "catch," the remainder goes automatically to the community; there is no law, and there is no crime: there is no government, as a "civilized" state understands and practises it—for Law and Government are made (as Macaulay has said) for Property; there is no class-division, no class-poverty, no competition, and great content.

It must be added, however, that there is no progress. From all that can be gathered by scientific inquiry, such a state of things, in precisely its present form, has been from time immemorial; and there is neither expectation nor ground of change, so long as the community is in this manner cut off and self-contained.

Comes along the trader, and inoculates this ancient age-long communism with the germs of individualism and the competitive principle. What follows? Disorganizing, disintegrating, demoralising forces are set loose. The immemorial order begins to break down. Traditional sanctions lose their hold, laws have to be framed. Discontent and division arise. Personal differences in ability become the means of personal advantage in possession. Crimes are committed; the people enter into the knowledge of evil; old

virtues become vices ; vices—for example, possessing things apart from the whole—become virtues. Classes begin to differentiate themselves ; there are rich and poor, masters and men, capital and labour. The community finds itself not merely in ferment, but at war within itself.

But now progress begins. Latent talents are disclosed ; new enterprises, making larger demands on the powers both of brain and heart, are originated ; the capacity for initiating, for creating, buds out everywhere ; the sense of power increases in the presence of an unaccustomed resistance ; the horizon widens ; depths are disclosed ; new ideals rise like unfamiliar stars ; the old men see visions, the young men dream dreams ; a salt taste comes into the waters of life. With the new effort comes a new consciousness ; and beneath the clash of interests a profounder unity begins to show faintly.

Even factual history is symbolic ; and if the nomadic homogeneous tribe is to become a heterogeneous nation compact together, the route lies through Egypt and the Wilderness.

There are modern prophets who proclaim communism as the only true goal of social reform movement : they have the facts on their side ; if, and when, this communism arrives, it will be as different in structure and in content from the primitive form as the New Jerusalem is from the Garden of Eden ; and not only different, but higher, since the intermediate experience—which

is Civilization—counts. History proceeds ; it moves not in circles, but in a spiral.

It is necessary to observe that the word " Civilization " is used in two senses. One is abstract, the other concrete. In the one sense, a more idealistic sense, it refers in a general inclusive way to the gains of all the ages—gains in art and science, in knowledge and understanding, in range of outlook and culture. Nobody is so foolish as to say that these gains are other than real and substantial. They form a permanent and accumulating tradition, stored not simply in stones and libraries, but in the very structure of the social body and mind. The Ninth Symphony is not only better as to musical form, but more significant, more spiritual, than the monotony of the savage tom-tom ; and could not have been achieved in a primitive society, even if its existence had been prolonged undisturbed to the end of time.

Civilization in this sense is above criticism.

But in the other sense of the word—the concrete—it can be used in the plural number. We can speak of the rise and fall of civilizations ; of Babylonian, Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Western civilizations. It is possible that still earlier civilizations existed ; but within historical time this earth has seen successive civilizations run their course and come to an end. It is not to be questioned that they have given permanent gifts to the race-life, added each an imperishable quota



to its advancement, but as structures they lie to-day beneath the oblivious sands. The tide rises, but each proud wave in succession breaks. Life enters a form, develops under that form, but anon passes beyond it, and the form perishes. No age completes itself.

As Mr. Kipling in one of his finest poems has reminded us, each age has its vision of Truth and reality, tries to realize it in organized structure; but at the moment when success appears possible, and achievement is about to be proclaimed, the strange word goes forth from the Unseen, "The end is forbidden"; thereupon the fabric crumbles, the structure totters, and there is scarce time to carve upon the apparently futile stones—

After me cometh a Builder; tell him I too have known  
before that which soared a palace falls a heap.

Inquiry shows that, making due allowance for circumstances, these civilizations ran a remarkably similar course; and perished finally not of old age so much as of disease. Strangely enough, a modern theory has been put forward to account for the decline of the old Roman civilization as being due to the acclimatizing at the heart of the empire of some bacillus, brought by returning troops from a foreign land! The theory has not received much support, and it may be said at once that Carpenter's bacillus is of another order altogether, and creates "the kind of disease"

which is civilization, rather than the decay and devitalization which brings civilization to an end. Its name is Private Property.

As in the body disease arises from the loss of the physical unity which constitutes Health, and so takes the form of warfare or discord between the various parts, or of abnormal development of individual organs, or the consumption of the system by predatory germs and growths ; so in our modern life we find the unity gone which constitutes true society, and in its place warfare of classes and individuals, abnormal development of some to the detriment of others, and consumption of the organism by masses of social parasites.<sup>1</sup>

The prevalence of physical disease—to such an extent that in our own country we maintain an army of tens of thousands of doctors to defend us from its ravages, and in vain !—habitual intellectual unrest, social discontent, the sense of sin,—these things, which are among the conspicuous marks of modern civilization, contrast vividly with the naturally healthy, care-free, joyous, naïve life-habit of pagan and barbarous peoples. Something has decomposed the social unity. What is it ?

All students of this subject agree that the growth of property and the ideas and institutions flowing from it did at a certain point bring about such a change in the structure of human society that the new stage might fairly be distinguished from the earlier stages of Savagery and Barbarism by a separate term. The growth of wealth, it is shown, and with it the conception of private pro-

<sup>1</sup> *Civilization : its Cause and Cure*, p. 2.

perty, brought on certain very definite new forms of social life ; it destroyed the ancient system of society based upon the gens, that is, a society of equals founded upon blood-relationship, and introduced a society of classes founded upon differences of material possession ; it destroyed the ancient system of mother-right and inheritance through the female line, and turned the woman into the property of the man ; it brought with it private ownership of land, and so created a class of landless aliens, and a whole system of rent, mortgage, interest ; it introduced slavery, serfdom, and wage-labour, which are only various forms of the dominance of one class over another ; and to rivet these authorities it created the State and the policeman.<sup>1</sup>

Civilization may therefore be said to date roughly from the formation of class-divisions founded on property. This is " the Fall." Here disintegration and corruption begin. The tendency of property is to separate ; it separates a man from Nature, by encasing him in an artificial life and creating for him a world from which Nature, the large elemental life, is for the most part excluded ; it separates him from his true Self, by concentrating his effort and attention upon the gratification of the senses and of desires connected therewith, ministering to self-consciousness, and making him forgetful of his true identity ; it separates him from his fellows, by stimulating his more superficial and selfish nature.

For the true Self of man consists in his organic relation with the whole body of his fellows ; and when a

<sup>1</sup> *Civilization : its Cause and Cure*, p. 4.

man abandons his true Self he abandons also his true relation to his fellows. The mass-man must rule in each unit-man, else the unit-man will drop off and die.<sup>1</sup>

It must be borne in mind that Carpenter, here, is indicating the general tendency of private property; other tendencies of course operate in the community, and counteract to some extent its logical influence. The land-owning class is not necessarily idle or selfish; and the man who has a "private income" is not necessarily unproductive. Disposition has to be taken into account as well as Environment; and, as Mr. Lester F. Ward (quoted by Mr. Graham Wallas in his *The Great Society*, p. 197) shows, "in modern times, a large proportion of the most important intellectual achievements have been the by-product of the institution of private property," and "about a third of the European writers of acknowledged genius have sprung from the small class of the land-owning nobility."

This statement does not rebut Carpenter's main contention; he is not concerned with the by-products, but with the direct product, of the institution of private property; there may be many men whose genius and whose wisdom so direct the use of that leisure and opportunity which unearned income often provides, that such ownership is justified in their case in the highest sense; but on the other hand, a long list might be enumerated of evils which

<sup>1</sup> *Civilization: its Cause and Cure*, p. 28.



exist conspicuously in the social body, which affect large areas of the masses of men and women, and which beyond any denial derive ultimately from the fact that private property is a central principle of civilized social organization.

It is a perplexing phenomenon—this apparently necessary co-existence of evil with progress. It makes a supreme demand upon human insight and self-possession. It is so easy to despair as one contemplates disintegrating forces working themselves out ; so easy to let the arm drop and to ungird the loin in the presence of a seemingly insoluble tangle ; so difficult to be tenacious of hope. Calmness and confidence—which mean efficiency—depend here upon a broad view. It should be clear that just as the breaching of the Garden of Eden by the Serpent was necessary in order that holy manhood might arise out of animal innocence through painful knowledge and practice of good and evil ; just as self-consciousness, with all its delusions and oppositions, its wanderings and suffering, must break in upon the undifferentiated consciousness of animals in order that Man may arise, climb the steep ascent of heaven, and become at last even as the gods ; just as a complaisant, superficial, externally-imposed habit of virtue must be disturbed and violated by lapses and rebellions in order that that inner and only Virtue may be established, which is the “ health of the soul ” ; just as a unity which is simple homogeneity must be subject to confusion if



the higher unity which exists amid and through differences is to be achieved ; so does Civilization lie between Barbarism on the one hand and the true Democracy on the other. The primitive social unity must be decomposed that society may be recomposed in a higher unity. The dominance of the Mass-man in each unit-man which constitutes the health and order of the early community, the gens, must be challenged and temporarily overthrown by the reign of a " false individuality " based upon possession and conquest, in order that the consciousness of the true individuality may arise and the Mass-man be reinstated upon a stabler throne governing an enriched and far-extended kingdom.

This moment of divorce, then, this parenthesis in human progress, covers the ground of all History ; and the whole of Civilization, and all crime and disease, are only the materials of its immense purpose—themselves destined to pass away as they arose—but to leave their fruits eternal.<sup>1</sup>

It might be supposed that this breadth of view, this almost cosmic sweep of vision, which finds a necessary place for Evil in the wholeness of the race-movement, should lead naturally to lethargy and laissez-faire, the attitude of Little Bo-Peep who would " leave them alone and they'll come home." If Evil is necessary, if it is even valuable as a means to an end, why

<sup>1</sup> *Civilization : its Cause and Cure*, p. 25.

should we trouble overmuch about it, or strive against it?

This might be a possible attitude if we were mere spectators of the process; but we are also parts of the process—the thing is working itself out in and through us. Just because progress is real, our antagonisms are real, and as inherently necessary as it is. The fermenting, disintegrating influence is not an intrusion from without, but an upthrust from within. The Serpent did not come through the fence, but was hatched in the Garden. Progress

is a word which may be applied to any world-movement or individual career in the same sense as it may be applied to the performance of a musical work, which progresses to its final chord, yet the conclusion of the whole is not in the final chord, but in that which runs beneath and inspires the entire web—in that which from first to last the whole complex succession of chords and phrases indicates.<sup>1</sup>

It issues, too, through discords as well as harmonies, through dissonance as well as through melody.

There are those who, feeling the current of world-movement about them, instinctively shut their eyes and hold the more tenaciously to their ground; others, shaken from their mooring, go hither and thither in alternating enthusiasm and despair; but some—and Carpenter is conspicuous among them—standing calm, balanced, self-

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 481.

possessed in mid-current, say "Yes" to the swirling waters, the antagonisms and labours; enter into them with zest and boldness, just because they believe in progress and have glimpsed its goal. No one has challenged the "wrongs of man to man" with sterner voice than he; or uttered more prophetic warning to the oppressor; or poured such flood of scorn upon the infidelity which, like a cancer of whose presence the victim is unaware, roots at the heart of modern society.

Do you think that it is a fine thing to grind cheap goods out of the hard labour of ill-paid boys? And do you imagine that all your Commerce Shows and Manufactures are anything at all compared with the bodies and souls of these?

Do you suppose I have not heard your talk about Morality and Religion and set it face to face in my soul to the instinct of one clean naked unashamed Man?

Do you think that there ever was or could be Infidelity greater than this?<sup>1</sup>

If he is asked concerning the "Triumph of Civilization," he takes his note-book and opens its page at a sketch from life—clear-cut, poignant, a *chose vue*, an unadorned comment:

On the outskirts of a great city,

A street of fashionable mansions well withdrawn from all the noise and bustle;

And in the street—the only figure there—in the middle of the road, in the bitter wind,

Red-nosed, thin-shawled, with ankles bare and old boots,

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 21.

A woman bent and haggard, croaking a dismal song.  
 And the great windows stare upon her wretchedness,  
 and across the road upon each other,  
 With big fool eyes ;  
 But not a door is opened, not a face is seen,  
 No form of life down all the dreary street,  
 To certify the existence of humanity—  
 Other than hers.<sup>1</sup>

Read his *Empire*,<sup>2</sup> and *The British*,<sup>3</sup> *The Lancashire Mill-hand*,<sup>4</sup> *Portland* ;<sup>5</sup> and you will hear the sound of the unsparing lash, the groaning of a spirit that feels the world-burden as its own, and the indignant railing of one who faces the sordid, ugly, brutish, cruel, inhuman side of modern civilization.

But—some one may be supposed to say—if this civilization with all its tale of woes is a necessary stage in communal development towards a higher unity, why make all this fuss? The answer is, because this process is taking place within humanity ; it is not something happening in the etheric spaces between individuals, but it involves the individuals themselves. The challenge against evil is not uttered as a matter of choice on the part of the challenger, but of necessity. What imposes the necessity? The presence and the urge in the man's heart of That whose arrival creates the ferment and opposition, but whose inevitable triumph will establish an order—"the finished, free society"<sup>6</sup>—trans-

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 269.<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 462.<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 467.<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 482.<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 468.<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 287.

cendent above it. The same one thing which drives the man into the arena and fills him with the lust and passion of battle gives him also his vision which the dust and smoke never quite becloud, and to<sup>1</sup> which his eyes are always returning.

Slowly out of the ruins of the past—like a young fern-frond uncurling out of its own brown litter—

Out of the litter of a decaying society, out of the confused mass of broken-down creeds, customs, ideals,

Out of distrust and unbelief and dishonesty, and Fear—

Out of the cant of Commerce, the crocodile sympathy of nation with nation ;

The despair and unbelief possessing all society—rich and poor, educated and ignorant, the money-lender, the wage-slave, the artist and the washerwoman alike ;

All feeling the terrible pressure and tension of the modern problem ;

Out of the litter and muck of a decaying world,

Lo ! even so

I see a new life arise.<sup>1</sup>

If civilization is, as here defined, an interim stage, full of turmoil and dis-ease, between a lower and a higher social unity, there is no "cure" for it in any therapeutic sense. It has to be lived through. It cannot suddenly be brought to an end. It has its own time. The demand upon the man of earnestness and wisdom is that he should discern and establish, so far as may be, the permanent elements at work within it. It will be necessary to look at one or two practical

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 260.



details when we come to examine the social implications of Carpenter's teaching ; but it will suffice here to permit him to utter two exhortations to the eager soul who is confronted by the welter and confusion, and desires to play his part in it. What shall he do ?

In the first place, he will prepare his own heart for the prevision and reception of the higher unity ; and this is all the more important because, as we have so often seen, these things begin in the individual heart.

Our towns are copied fragments of our breast,  
And all man's Babylons do but impart  
The grandeur of his Babylonian heart.

This preparation in the heart for the vision—which is the Reality existing as sure promise—can be compassed chiefly by simplifying one's life, getting nearer to Nature, keeping scrupulously clean both body and mind, cleansing the mirror of sensation and perception so that the image of the heavenly city may fore-shine therein. It may be truly said that no man ever made himself a worthy temple but that the presence of the Spirit filled it with the train of glory. It may be that all men cannot do this ; but such as can, lie (for that reason, and by that sign) in the direct line of true human progress. Having received the vision, a man must tell it, despite the possible scorn of the world ; the light must be sent gleaming through the world ; with frank-

ness and courage and persistence, he must say what he sees. He must conform his heart to the Truth that is in him ; he must answer the demand for such new life-habit and self-orientation as may be necessary. He must be no longer divided against himself. He must anticipate, in vision and in practice, the higher world-unity in himself.

When a new desire has declared itself within the human heart, when a fresh plexus is forming among the nerves—then the revolutions of nations are already decided, and histories unwritten are written.<sup>1</sup>

The second and subsequent thing to be done is that he should fling himself with zest and whole-heartedness into the oppositions which characterize the civilization-period. He must fight hard, but without bitterness of spirit. He must avoid compromise of the prudential and calculating type. He must not be over-anxious to compose differences. The thing has to be fought out. He need not fear mistakes, for it does not matter that the whole truth and nothing but the truth should be with him. Truth is less in fact than it is in spirit. The line of human progress is along the diagonal of a parallelogram of forces, and is energized by and determined through the divergencies and oppositions represented by the adjacent sides. What powers he has of mind, imagination, insight, will, must be faithfully used for the creation and establish-

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 45.

ment within the present imperfect and temporary order of such structure as shall correspond to and realize the vision in his heart. By loyalty to himself in action he must make "the golden beam incline." The way is long, but there is plenty of time. "Do not hurry; have faith."

The man who would answer to the full detail of this requirement would be an ideal man indeed. Most ordinary men will discover self-deficiencies somewhere. The intuitive imagination is rarely combined with the constructive imagination. Conception and execution do not always keep house together. Each man must move in the direction of his strength, sure in his heart that what he lacks is provided for somewhere and will not fail him.

Carpenter, as we have already seen, is weak in constructive ability. He can see the "cause of Civilization" much more clearly than he can suggest a "cure." He can see the goal much more plainly than he can engineer the road thither. But if he has seen the Truth, then it is certain that over all the world every reforming agency, every actuarial office, every scientific laboratory, every committee-room, is co-operating to find scaffolding, material, and hands for the erection of such social structure and organization as shall give effect to his vision.

## CHAPTER XII

### FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

#### (a) JOY

"Only those of tranquil mind, and none else, can attain abiding joy, by realizing within their souls the Being who manifests one essence in a multiplicity of forms."—*The Upanishads*.

#### (b) DELIVERANCE

"But most of all I love  
Those happy ones to whom 'tis life to live  
In single fervid faith and love unseeing,  
Drinking the blessed Amrit of my Being."  
*The Bhagavad-Gita.*

#### (c) REST

"All which I took from thee I did but take,  
Not for thy harms,  
But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms.  
All which thy child's mistake  
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home ;  
Rise, clasp My hand, and come !"  
FRANCIS THOMPSON.

#### ARGUMENT

*The pragmatical test will be applied to this experience which is the basis of Carpenter's message. What are its fruits? They are many and various, but three are singled out.*

(I) Joy ; which, in contradistinction with Pleasure and Felicity, is defined as the consciousness of

*triumph in life, the Music of Ascent, the song of the liberated soul.*

(2) *Deliverance, which, in its essence, is the passing from a narrower into a wider life, and is notably experienced in respect of Fear and Care and Evil.*

(3) *Rest, which is defined in terms of withdrawal of personal energy from dissipation and wastage in centrifugal activities, finding the inward centre, and establishing the life there in self-possession and equipoise.*

A TREE is known by its fruits. The pragmatist may not be the ultimate test; but it is valuable, whether as critical or confirmatory of a truth primarily asserted on other grounds. No wise man, Carpenter least of all, is concerned to offer and parade the allurements of rewards; he "opens a door"; but it is not possible for him to do justice to his experience, the Truth that is in him, without disclosing its immediate practical issues. The inquirer is justified in seeking to know whether the tendency of a certain teaching or practice is lifeward, does actually make for the "more life and fuller that we want"; and although Carpenter is at times tantalizingly indifferent about giving satisfaction to anybody, his self-disclosure is so direct, naïve, complete, that no one need be in any doubt as to the life-gifts which he himself actually received and realized in that experience which is the core and substance of his message to the world.



Of three of these gifts—Joy, Deliverance, Rest—we have now to write; they are chosen as typical of the rest, the enumeration of which would require a long list. A descriptive examination of them will reveal the important fact that they are not separate gifts so much as different forms under which the same quality of consciousness manifests amid the mortal life-circumstance. In a world in which men are “busy about many things,” and are engaged in manifold quests which can scarcely fail to become wearisome since they are (even in moments of temporary success) profoundly unsatisfying and really endless, it needs to be reiterated that “one thing is needful”; that “one thing” may be variously defined in terms of theology, or religion, or mysticism—as, for example, the free grace of God, or union with Christ, or the love-consciousness; at bottom these are one and the same; nor is it another thing when Carpenter speaks of

This mighty Life—past, present, and to come—  
Enfolds thee. This thou art. This thou upgatherest;  
And this Thou, tiny creature, pourest forth—  
Where now thou standest—  
Lord of the world, from caverns dark within thee.<sup>1</sup>

This inward experience of conscious union with the All-Life, the sense of the Whole welling up as the reality and significance of the Part,

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 372.

this perceived personal godhood, this felt oneness of all things and of all selves deep within the individual heart, is the one gift with which all other things are freely given. It is, as we have already seen, Freedom, Equality, Life eternal; and the things which we are now to consider—Joy, Deliverance, Rest—are not other than it, but itself in varied manifestation.

### I. JOY

A distinction must be made between Joy and Pleasure. The latter is superficial, the former is profound. Pleasure is the sensational aspect of a passing experience, a cruder emotional reaction to a presented object; physical elements predominate in it, and it is the contrary of pain. Pleasure and pain may co-exist, but only at different levels of consciousness. Joy, on the other hand, is a general personal attitude or orientation towards life as a whole; it is independent of any and every object or situation as immediately presented; it is self-affirmation in strength and confidence; it is the index of spiritual autonomy; it is the note struck by spiritual mastery; it is an essential characteristic and property of the spiritual life; it is not determined by circumstances, and retains its peculiar qualitative distinction even when it is "three parts pain."

In figurative language, pleasure is like the short-lived effervescence of aerated water, Joy

is like the bubbling of the perennial fountain. Pleasure is the ripple on the sunlit sea which, the very next moment, may be whipped by a sudden squall into foam "white as the bitten lip of hate"; Joy is more like the ocean swell, or the moon-drawn tides. Pleasure is like the variable breeze, Joy is the trade-wind. Changing the thought-form, Pleasure may be given, Joy must be won. Pleasure depends upon what is about you, Joy upon what you are in yourself. Pleasure is an emotion, Joy is the instinct of the free soul. Any creature capable of sensation may have pleasure, Joy arises only when the "fountains of the deep" are unloosed.

A distinction must also be made between Joy and Felicity. Felicity may be described as the emotional aspect of the state of perfection; it was found in the Garden of Eden before the entrance of the Serpent; it is the word usually employed to describe the state of those who have reached the final bliss of Heaven. It is not suggested by these references that Felicity is fictitious or illusory; it is a real experience for which we need not wait translation to another world than this: lovers know it in their hours of quiet and deep togetherness; the saint knows it when, oblivious of the outer world, his soul communes with God. But Felicity is essentially static, and is found (if at all) at the resting-places; at the mountain-top, but not as you climb; at the inn, but not as you trudge the dusty road;

at the oasis, but not as you march through the waste.

On the other hand, Joy is essentially dynamic, and may be defined, in contrast, as the consciousness of the triumphant ascent of life. It is the song in the heart of wayfarer or warfarer who knows that he is inherently able to rise to whatever may be demanded of him. It is perhaps the sense of being just more than equal to the situation. It sounds wherever strength and ability are just in excess of pressure and requirement. It is the ringing answer to life's challenge made by the knight who has measureless trust in himself, and is not afraid of a defeat which cannot for him mean ultimate failure. It is something which Henley—if one may judge from a familiar poem—and Nietzsche just missed; for Joy is not to be equated with dour heroism and stolid defiance, nor with a zest in life which evidences itself by the pantings of one who is desperately hard put to it, or by groanings which can scarcely be uttered; about Joy there are always the infallible marks of undoubted mastery—a certain ease, lightheartedness, insouciance, carelessness, detachment.

Laughter is as characteristic of Carpenter as it is of Nietzsche; in each it is full of meaning, but of how different a quality! In Nietzsche's laughter there is always the suspicion of something sinister. His "railing alongside the torrent" is magnificent, but terrible. As he laughs, he side-



steps, and suggests something darkly subtle, almost fiendish. It is Jehovic, derisive ("He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision"), defiant, bullying, superior, contemptuous. It is the dance of the cannibal just prior to eating his man. Nietzsche's laughter is an index of a triumph which comes by crushing down opposition, not by transcending it; it accompanies the realization of power to stand isolated and alone, rather than the consciousness of being united with all. It is full of pride and scorn; we feel that it might pass into curses without any emotional change; it is forced, in the sense of being elicited rather by antipathy than sympathy; he wanted a god who could dance, but we feel that he would like to be whipping him to make him dance. For all his laughter, Nietzsche was no "happy warrior."

Carpenter's laughter, on the other hand, is no less exuberant and boisterous; he, too, can make the welkin ring; at times there is something even terrible about it, something wild, weird, unworldly; but it is always charged with kindness and understanding; it is Olympian rather than Mephistophelian; he is often found laughing with himself, one overhears him at it; not seldom he laughs at himself, as one who is surprised at finding himself at home in a world which he had imagined alien, or at discovering lovers where stupidly he had suspected enemies. It is the index of his amazement at the goodness of the



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world, and the splendour of life, as the nascent soul sees it, and illumines it with its own light. It is the music made by the strong beating of the soul's wings as it rises from its burial-place and wings its way through every mortal circumstance back to Paradise. It is the exultancy of resurrection.

In the poem "Towards Democracy" the words Joy and Laughter—usually in conjunction—are constantly recurring. Sometimes they are unexpectedly slipped into the text in brackets, as a reminder of the nature of the emotional atmosphere from which the song is distilled. The careful reader will note where the words are slipped in. For example,

To realize Freedom—for this hitherto, for you, the universe has rolled; for this, desires, fears, complications, bewilderments, sufferings, hope, regret—all falling away at last duly before the Soul, before You (O laughter!) arising the full-grown lover, possessor of the password.<sup>1</sup>

Or again,

O laughter! the Soul invading, looking proudly upon its new kingdom, possessing the offerings of all pleasures, forbidden and unforbidden, from all created things—if perchance it will stoop to accept them; the everlasting life.<sup>2</sup>

Sometimes he seems to chuckle, as if the beautiful thing that is in him were bubbling over:

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

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I am the poet of hitherto unuttered joy.

A little bird told me the secret in the night, and henceforth I go about seeking to whom to whisper it.

I see the heavens laughing, I discern the half-hidden faces of the gods wherever I go, I see the transparent opaque veil in which they hide themselves; yet I dare not say what I see—lest I should be locked up! <sup>1</sup>

It is the laughter of the man who has the secret, and yet so whimsy is the world that he cannot give it away as he would. Then in the next breath he rings it out:

Laughter, O laughter! O soul exhaled through suffering, arising free! <sup>2</sup>

The really whimsy thing is not that he cannot tell the secret, but that we cannot receive it from him second-hand as it were. He can tell it right enough. He comes to you, and takes your hand, and says:

All this day we will go together; the sun shall circle overhead; our shadows swing round us on the road; the winter sunshine shall float wonderful promises to us from the hills; the evening see us in another land;

The night ever insatiate of love we will sleep together, and rise early and go forward again in the morning;

Wherever the road shall lead us, in solitary places or among the crowd, it shall be well; we shall not desire to come to the end of the journey, nor consider what the end may be; the end of all things shall be with Us. <sup>3</sup>

Yes, there it is! That is the secret. There is the well-spring of Joy. You may feel it while

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 65.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

*Ibid.*, p. 96.

you hold his hand ; but the secret will only be your own, your inalienable possession, when your Soul, too, is liberated within. That is Joy.

O joy of the liberated soul (finished purpose and acquittal of civilization) daring all things—light step, life held in the palm of the hand ! O swift and eager delight of battle, passion of love destroying and destroying the body !

Eternal and glorious War ! Liberation ! the soul like an eagle—from gaping wounds and death—rushing forth screaming into its vast and eternal heaven.<sup>1</sup>

Passages might be multiplied almost indefinitely ; the theme has many variations. Joy is the birth-cry of the soul. With the expansion of life from this deep centre, more joy. It is the dominant of the soul's own harmony ; and is the diapason that booms in those world-harmonies which the soul discovers rather than creates. It is the sound which hovers over the waters of the soul-life poured forth. It is the consciousness which accompanies all creative work ; so God is said to "renew His ancient rapture" ; so a woman is said to joy because a man-child is born into the world. It gives the peculiar quality to the frenzy of the poet, the rapture of the lover, the ecstasy of the saint. It is the recognition of the God within. Cosmic emotionalism, if you like ; but at this level, as at all others, emotion cannot be divorced from thought and will ; in

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 101.

Joy there is both Vision and Power ; resurrection is ascension ; the soul's awakening is the ascent of the life ; that which from the soul's-side is growth and expansion, is from the world-side redemption ; at the heart of the universe there is Joy evermore, a blossoming Tree of Life. He knows it who is " born of the Spirit."

## 2. DELIVERANCE

Deliverance—and it is none the less true for being almost a truism—is to find entrance into a larger life.<sup>1</sup> This is the common denominator of all redemptive experience. There are minor and major deliverances, but they all illustrate this fact. The reason why Work is one of the great consolations is because it " takes us out of ourselves," as we say. The satisfaction which arises sometimes suddenly in the form of a windfall to a poor man, or more often tardily in the form of success and prosperity to the man who for years has had a hard and harassing struggle, is due to the fact that he is set free from little irritating anxieties and cares ; he has more scope and elbow-room ; his attention is liberated from certain petty details and somewhat sordid calculations. The experience is real and valid enough,

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Stephen Graham tells that the inhabitants of Nova Zembla give the name of " Resurrection Day " to the day when the solitary annual mail-packet visits the island from the mainland—the glad experience of touch with a wider life.



although in many cases such deliverance is short-lived ; if a man cannot rise to the height of his liberty, his last state is worse than the first ; and space is no blessing to him, but a bane, if he is to be tossed and blown about in it like a wind-driven leaf. The good becomes evil if he has not mastery.

The allurements of intoxicating drink—delusive deliverance, but an effective illustration—is to be accounted for on the same principle ; it lets a man out into another and a bigger world which he fills with his expansive feelings ; the artificial stimulus helps him to transcend the often distressing limitations of his usual life ; it unlooses his tongue, and his imagination, and his heart-strings ; he feels friendly and at peace with the world ; he feels as if the whole world belonged to him ; he becomes unaccountably self-reliant and unafraid. Intense religious feeling, of the spasmodic, intermittent type—if this can truly be called “ religious ”—produces the same order of effects.

Many a man lives long enough to be grateful for a sorrow which, by deepening (which, for personality, is the same thing as widening) his heart, delivered him from a habit of meanness,—wherein he dwelt as in a prison, with a perpetual grudge against the world—into happy, sympathetic, understanding membership with the community.

The peculiar pleasure which normal human persons find in social intercourse, in making new



acquaintances, in reading, in travel, arises because we are thereby delivered from a more or less narrow and parochial outlook and habit, and feel within ourselves the freshening, vitalizing motions of the currents of a wider life.

The narrow creed, whether of ethics or theology, wherein sometimes a man feels strait-laced and stifled, is breached by doubts, punctured by interrogations, bombarded by the new facts of science or the new ideas of philosophy as by explosive projectiles, and through pain, but ultimately with great satisfaction, the man enters into the broader view and the larger faith.

The great life always waits upon the opening heart ; there is no need to fear a vacuum. Enlarge your cup, and there is always more than enough to fill it, if you will only plunge it into the stream.

The Redeemer is the revaluer, and the re-valuing means the placing of the life-facts in a larger perspective, an ampler setting.

Restriction, as we have already said, is not an evil thing in itself ; far otherwise ; the higher the animal, the longer the natural pre-natal period ; an abortive birth is the most tragic of failures. We must not mistake the womb for the prison. The blossom requires the protective sheath. The undisciplined life requires the restraint of conventions each of which crystallizes a good deal of communal experience. The original thinker must not break away from

tradition too soon or too easily. The higher faith is nurtured in the creed which becomes ultimately outworn. We cannot, without exceptional risk, be disobedient to the law of the "fulness of time." There is as much profound treachery in not waiting, as there is in not answering when the time arrives. Patience is the condition of our being "perfect and entire." But every restriction is a means to liberty. Every limit implies a beyond; and the Beyond is not a forbidden land one moment after the potential possessor is ready to take possession. It is a natural inheritance which only waits our coming of age. Faithfulness under restraint is not only the credential, but, as it were, also the mechanism, whereby entrance into the wider life is ministered unto us. It is because, according to Carpenter's teaching, the deepening of personal life brings us to consciousness within wider and wider unities, that the experience of deliverance—illustrated and foreshadowed by what has just been said—is a peculiar and conspicuous characteristic of it.

It is the inner voice of the Life Universal that waits within, knocking at the interior door of the heart, which cries:

O child of mine!

See! You are in prison, and I can give you space;

You are choked down below there, by the dust of your own raising, and I can give you the pure intoxicating air of the mountains to breathe;

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I can make you a king, and show you all the lands of the earth ;

And from yourself to yourself I can deliver you.<sup>1</sup>

Self-consciousness itself is a restriction ; it arises at the surface-planes which are the faces and sides of the jutting peaks of separated individuality. In the common practice of life its restrictive effect is constantly realized. Not only does it alienate us from, and oppose us to, each other, creating those misunderstandings and misinterpretations which Love only can dispel and correct ; but, as far as it intrudes with any intensity, it lowers the quality of good work, makes the highest kind of work impossible, and in some cases is almost pathological in character, acts like an affliction cutting its victims off from the society of their fellows and making them painfully ineffective. Awkward, shy, always at a disadvantage, without sense of humour, ever imagining themselves observed or worrying over their appearance before others, these unfortunate people live in the prison-house of self-consciousness the walls of which are lined with untrue and distorting mirrors. Such abnormal cases exhibit in extreme form the restrictions and limitations which self-consciousness imposes. These latter indubitably serve a valuable purpose in the development of the latencies of personality, but there is no finality about them, they exist to be transcended. There can be but little doubt

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 8.

that the great world-stories of the Saviours and Messiahs, of Cinderella and the Sleeping Beauty, and the like, derive from the unconscious instinct of the soul that it is somehow embondaged within the mortal condition, and waits deliverance therefrom.

This figure of the Redeemer fills a prominent place, as we have seen, in Carpenter's teaching ; it is the Master, the Prince of Love ; under which names he refers to the Great Self which is the true Self of each, the Inward Kingdom, the deeper consciousness.

This "arrival of the Master" is the true deliverance ; there is really no other ; all apparent deliverances are similitudes of this ; all partial deliverances hint at the completeness of this.

O love, love, love,  
At thy feet,  
By thy side,  
My hand if only resting in thine ;  
See, I am so little, I ask so little—  
If thou wilt only take this little overflowing cup  
Into thy great ocean.<sup>1</sup>

To descend into detail—there are three things from which, chiefest of all, men seek deliverance : they are Fear, Care, Evil. An appeal may be made here to common experience, for full-grown men are actually delivered from some of the fears

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 161.



of childhood, and modern men are delivered from some of the ancient dreads. To state the fact in this way is to state the cause of the deliverance. The fearsome fancies of the nursery were the offspring of ignorance and inexperience ; the ancient terrors were the creations of superstition and of false views of the world ; they vanish when the man enters into the wider life of reason, knowledge, and experience, like the night-shadows which vanish with the coming of day. Many men, carried away at the moment by great enthusiasms, have no fear of death ; others have been delivered from this fear by a broader view of life wherein death finds a healthful and life-ward function.

Similarly, we are delivered from many cares according as our life takes on a larger sweep and a grander manner, just as a man who walks by the sun or by the stars is not so anxious concerning the details of his way as is he who needs a local sign at every turning. Precisely in the same fashion, many are delivered from things which in youth-time are harmful, bruising, threatening, evil, by the mere fact of the natural ascent of the life into the control of the higher centres, the quickening of wider interests, the fixing of the life-centre outside the narrow boundaries of the Little Self, the " stupid old body," the " wandering lunatic mind."

Clearly, so far as realized in particulars, deliverance is always in some form or other the



entrance into a wider life. It is this fact which Carpenter pushes to its logical conclusion. For of the deliverances to which reference has been made, some are incomplete, and some are temporary ; it is scarcely possible to destroy the whole brood of Fear and of Care piecemeal ; we escape the superstitious fears of paganism only to fall victims to the church-made fears of Christianity ; we leave one family of cares smitten by the roadside, only to find their more formidable cousins waiting for us round the next corner. Besides this, when all the particular fears and cares and evils that flesh is heir to have been enumerated, there remains over and above them in the very structure of ordinary human nature the capacity for Fear, for Anxiety, and for being tempted of evil. The final and perfect deliverance is to be lifted above even this capacity, to transcend it. This capacity for Fear and for Anxiety roots in our self-consciousness. Fear may be one expression of the instinct of self-preservation ; it is so in animals ; and the Self which we fear to lose is the outward Self and its appendages. Instructed only by our self-consciousness we imagine this to be the real self ; but to see that it is not our real self, that the true Self indeed thrives by the continual death of the outer self, and that the true Self, being the Universal particularized in the individual, is indestructible, is to perceive the possibility of redemption from all fear ; actually to realize

consciousness in this deep unity of all things is to have deliverance as an experience.

Deep as the universe is my life—nothing can destroy, nothing can harm me.<sup>1</sup>

We have already seen that there is nothing evil if a man have mastery over it; and this mastery, in its ultimate issue, is defined as the rise and establishment of the inward kingdom at the core of personal life, and the determination of effort from it. “Whosoever is begotten of God, cannot sin.”

One of the most beautiful aspects of Carpenter’s teaching on this point is his repeated insistence on the fact that one person may be the mediator of this deliverance to another; conspicuously to some, potentially to all, the redemptive function is given. In an exquisite love-song—for it is Love’s secret—he speaks to his friend:

Now when I am near to you, dear friend,  
 Passing out of myself, being delivered—  
 Through those eyes and lips and hands, so loved, so  
 ardently loved,  
 I am become free;  
 In the sound of your voice I dwell  
 As in a world defended from evil.  
 What I am accounted by the world to be—all that I  
 leave behind;  
 It is nothing to me any longer.  
 Like one who leaves a house with all its mouldy old  
 furniture and pitches his camp under heaven’s blue,

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 4.

So I take up my abode in your presence—  
I find my deliverance in you.<sup>1</sup>

Not less beautifully does he sing of one whose heart

shall be like a grave, where men may bury  
Sin and sorrow and shame, to rise in the new day  
Glorious out of their grave.<sup>2</sup>

Some there are who seek for deliverance by mental and religious practice; it is one of the roads, of which there are not a few; but if one would learn freedom, let him seek it also—his “passage and swift deliverance”<sup>3</sup>—in men and women. Almost any one will do, if you have the key to his heart, the adit, the love-right of entry.

Now who so despised and lost, but what shall be my Saviour?

Is there one yet sick and suffering in the whole world? or deformed, condemned, degraded?

Thither hastening, I am at rest—for this one can absolve me.

O, I am greedy of love—all, all are beautiful to me!

You are my deliverers every one—from death, from sin, from evil—

I float, I dissolve in you!

O bars of self, you cannot shut me now.

O frailest child, O blackest criminal,

Whoe'er you are I never can repay you—though the world despise you, you are glorious to me;

For you have saved me from myself,

You delivered me when I was in prison—

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 273.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 183.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 285.

I passed through you into heaven,  
You were my Christ to me.<sup>1</sup>

It is a modern setting of a truth as old as the hills. "Perfect love casteth out fear." And why? Because wheresoever even two are met in love's name, "there I am"—the universal Life, the Great Self, the Master.

### 3. REST

The door that opens into the Land of Quiet is one that opens inward. The attainment of Rest is largely in our own hands, for there is an inward kingdom where rest is always to be found whatever be the outward disturbance. Carpenter calls it "The Central Calm,"<sup>2</sup> and his symbol for it is the centre of a cyclone whose relative fixity and peace is "guarded by the very tornado around."

Our circumstances are full of change and of uncertainty; it is as if "Time itself" were "rushing on with amazing swiftness in its vast and endless round"; the consequence of this is that, at the circumference where he comes into touch with the external world, a man's life is characterized by turmoil and unrest; never more so than in these modern days wherein the tempo of living seems to have been so speeded up that "a day is as a thousand years." The rush, whirl, raucous-voiced din of modern life becomes at times almost a nightmare. The effort to keep

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 286.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 481.

oneself abreast of the times, to keep one's head above water in the competitive scramble, the necessity to be for ever on the *qui vive*, constantly to be adjusting oneself to new facts and new situations, to have the political arena on one's breakfast table freshly every morning, to have the four corners of the earth brought up to one's back garden, to have the world so interlaced and interlocked that the failure of a crop on the other side of the globe, the speculations of an unknown financier, the fall of an alien government, a hundred unforeseen and unforeseeable happenings, may threaten one with serious loss—the fever, anxiety, and pressure of all this, and of all the myriad other things that it suggests, is exhausting indeed. It is a veritable cyclone, and thousands of men are never out of the whirl and the storm.

Yet Carpenter, with eyes full open to what the world is for modern men and women, holds this possibility before us :

Like one in the calm that is the centre of a cyclone—  
guarded by the very tornado around—

Undisturbed, yet having access equally to every side,  
I drink of the deep well of rest and joy,  
And sit with all the gods in Paradise.

According to the teaching of orthodox Christianity there is a heavenly land lying beyond Death's river "where the weary are at rest." Carpenter's message contains and proclaims a similar gospel, but with two critical points of difference : the heavenly land is here, and is inward to



the soul ; and the rest is not the repose and refreshment of the weary (though that is not excluded), but that poise and balance which makes a man's strength and eager energy effective to the highest degree. It is more necessary to find the rest-centre while we are active than when we are spent. We want to find rest within effort rather than at the term of it. The door opens inward, and the movement is one of withdrawal ; but this does not exclude us from the world-life ; on the contrary, it gives us for the first time real possession of it. The cloister is not the solution of the world-problem.

The analogy of the cyclone must not be pressed in all its details ; indeed, in one respect this would lead to a complete misunderstanding of Carpenter's thought. For the centre of the cyclone seems to be a comparatively narrow and restricted place ; and, as we have seen often enough already, the process of withdrawal from the more superficial planes of personal consciousness leads us not to a narrow cell girt round with silences, but into a wider communion and a larger life.

The illustration must therefore be supplemented by others, and they are not far to seek.

In the winter the sap of trees and plants withdraws from every seasonal manifestation in leaf and sprout and bloom, and gathers itself down, descending through vein and artery, leaving branches and twigs bare and dry, that it may replenish itself in the inexhaustible reservoir of

the mother-energies of Nature that lie where the roots plunge down in the darkness.

The farmer conserves the energies of his fields by a rotation of crops, one crop feeding at deeper and another at more surface levels; one soil-stratum resting while another is occupied. This rule of change is one of the rules of rest. It is practically the only rule that the modern Western world knows. It is the way in which we try to make life on the circumference of the cyclone tolerable, and indeed possible. We alternate different kinds of work; we pass from toil to pleasure, from work-day to holiday, and for the most part do little more than substitute one form of exhaustion for another.

Periodically, however, the farmer's field must lie fallow, and during those fallow days the life that is in the soil not only lies open to the recreative influences of light and air, but withdraws also to meet and mingle with the virgin life which lies deeper than any roots have ever plumbed and searched. This is the *raison-d'être* for the ancient institution of the Sabbath and the Sabbatical Year.

The fundamental pivotal hypothesis of Carpenter's teaching is that the area of consciousness is by no means the whole area of the psychic life of the individual; that there is a psychic underworld which is demonstrably the reverse of inert and quiescent; that every conscious process has an unconscious underside, and, probably to a

greater degree than we are yet aware, our conscious life is determined by this subconscious region, as the colour in the surface waters of a river is determined not only by the light which plays upon it from without, but by the light also which breaks up from its bed, or as the surface movements of a sea are determined not only by the winds that blow from above, but also by the sub-currents that move beneath.

Our individualities are like apex-points, and our whole personalities are like the triangles or pyramids which broaden down from the point to the immeasurable base-line ; just as a tiny fleece of cloud visible in the summer sky may be the apex-point of incalculable areas of invisible water-vapour which extend behind it far into the celestial spaces.

A mountain climber standing on his peak in the morning, before the mists have left the deep valleys beneath him, looks round and beholds a cloudy sea out of which there jut up into the sunlight innumerable peaks small and great. But he knows how they broaden beneath that clinging shroud of mist. Here is a symbol of human individuality. Normally we are conscious only of the apex-point, the sense of separation and opposition as we peer out at each other just above the time-mists ; most of us, however, have from time to time profound feelings, vague and half-comprehended, which are the unimpeachable witness of a greater Something which is not so

much within the Self as it is the Self. We have no measurements whereby the area of the pyramid can be calculated, at the apex of which a man stands self-conscious. We know only the veriest fringe and fragment of its potentialities. Above the threshold of consciousness we stand isolated and individual, like the peaks above the valley mists; beneath we broaden, and have not deepened very far before we begin to commingle. The pyramids begin to have common areas; and the deeper they descend, the larger grow those common areas. The more the depths of our lives announce themselves, the more do we know that we are all of one, rooted and grounded in a spiritual continuum, an ocean or matrix of spiritual Life. And the ultimate base of all the pyramids is one.

From this conception of human personality there follows the only natural and availing law of Rest.

In Eastern countries, and among those with whom mind-culture is the central (sometimes the only) science and art of life, great stress is laid upon the practice of thought-inhibition with a view to giving a free chance to subconscious energies to ascend and express themselves. It is claimed that, as a result of such practice, not only is knowledge of the spiritual universe of a peculiarly intimate character given them, but the normal faculties of the mind are greatly strengthened and quickened. It would seem that the



underside of conscious life, which is, indeed, always in relation to the above-side of consciousness, has choicer gifts of wisdom and insight and power to give us if only it can get the chance. It gets this chance when we do so inhibit our usual thought-processes that the surface-waters of the mind are at peace and still; as the globes of crystal light ascend from the depths of the quietened well-spring, or as the mountains and the sky are mirrored on the stilled surface of a pool.

Carpenter says very beautifully in *A Visit to a Gnani*:

When the noise of the workshop is over, and mallet and plane laid aside, the faint sounds come through the open window from the valley and the far sea-shore. So the dim fringe of diviner knowledge begins to grow as soon as the eternal click-clack of thought is over—the extraordinary intuitions, perceptions, which though partaking in some degree of the character of thought, spring from ultimately different conditions, and are the forerunners of a changed consciousness.<sup>1</sup>

It is obvious that so long as the only rest we know is the relief which comes by alternation of different kinds of effort, this “eternal click-clack of thought” goes on just the same. So far as the “click-clack” is concerned, the Stock Exchange is no better and no worse than the theatre; the desk in the office is no better and no worse than the bridge-table in the smoking-room; the newspaper with its latest tape prices

<sup>1</sup> *A Visit to a Gnani*, p. 38.



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is no better and no worse than the ephemeral novel which we pick up for a comfortable hour after dinner. The "click-clack" does not cease. Other winds blow on the surface waters, but these are confused and disturbed all the same. Holidays come as a relief from the long stretch of work-time, and change of air, scene, and acquaintance is a good thing so far as it goes; but the click-clack does not cease. There is a whole universe of difference between the alternation of circumference changes and the finding of the rest-centre.

Assuming the pyramidal conception of individual personality, the suggestion is that our life requires a fallow season when all activity shall cease, and the life shall withdraw and sink down towards the roots of being, lave itself in invisible waters, commingle with the universal life—the Father-life since we all came forth from it, and the Mother-life also since within the sacred ark of its womb we were from the first nourished and need ever to be returning thither that we may be reborn. This ingathering of the energies of life, recalling them from all surface activities, allowing them to be withdrawn into that spiritual matrix which is the foundation-life of every living thing, is the true law of Rest.

This All-Life wherefrom we are continually drawing lies deep beneath like virgin soil, and enfolds from above like a fertile atmosphere. We root in it, not as the plants root in the soil, but

as the mountains root in the mountain-ridges or the mountain-masses, or as these themselves root in the earth-crust. Herefrom arise the strength of our emotions, the energy of our passions, the impulse and flame of life. Because we are fed from it, we are able to blossom and bear fruit. And our true rest is a withdrawal of all centrifugal energies, and submerging them in the ocean of this life. As we cease to struggle for ourselves, we may feel it upbearing us ; as we lie passive and open within it, we may feel it suffusing us ; and the moments wherein we relax our hold of every world-thing—every plan, purpose, ambition, effort, labour—provide it with opportunity to cleanse, heal, revivify, recreate our every part. This is the availing Rest. It has been said that “ God helps those who help themselves ” ; it is at least equally true that the profoundest help of all comes when we cease helping ourselves.

It is not pretended that the attainment of this Rest, the fixing of the life at this rest-centre, the acquiring of steadfastness in self-poise so that one might stand “ balanced before a million universes ” and thereby be master of them and possess them, is an easy thing. It is not. It may be achieved through a practice which is all the more difficult for Western people since our general habit of life runs counter to the process of withdrawal. Details of such practice as is found among Hindu adepts may be studied in a chapter from Carpenter’s *From Adam’s Peak to Elephanta*,

which has been printed as a separate volume (already quoted)—“*A Visit to a Gnani.*” It is a discipline ; but a pearl of so great price is worth that a man should sell all that he has in order to become the possessor of the field containing it. The possibility lies for all. Each personal life contains the doorway.

Do not recklessly spill the waters of your mind in this direction and in that, lest you become like a spring lost and dissipated in the desert ;

But draw them together into a little compass and hold them still, so still ;

And let them become clear, so clear—so limpid, so mirror-like ;

At last the mountains and the sky shall glass themselves in peaceful beauty,

And the antelope shall descend to drink, and to gaze at his reflected image, and the lion to quench his thirst,

And Love himself shall come and bend over, and catch his own likeness in you.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 373.

## CHAPTER XIII

### SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

“ Bring me my bow of burning gold,  
Bring me my arrows of desire ;  
Bring me my spear ; O clouds, unfold !  
Bring me my Chariot of Fire !

I will not cease from Mental Fight,  
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,  
Till we have built Jerusalem  
In England's green and pleasant Land.”

BLAKE.

#### ARGUMENT

*A Social Ideal demands a social policy ; but it would be a mistake to identify Carpenter with any of the present conflicting social policies. His “ Mass-man,” however, may be regarded as a figurative expression of the idea of Solidarity. This is certainly implied in his teaching, and is to some extent worked out in one direction—namely, the distinction between true ownership and legal ownership, especially with reference to possession in Land.*

THE word “ Democracy ” implies a social ideal. Carpenter has defined it as the “ rule of the Mass-man (Demos) in the unit-man.”<sup>1</sup> Since, however, an Ideal is an

<sup>1</sup> *Civilization : its Cause and Cure*,” p. 34.

immanent dynamic as much as a transcendent goal, it is scarcely possible to hold faithfully to a social ideal without pursuing some form of social policy. As soon as a man ardently desires to arrive at some destination, he begins to examine various possible routes, and is not long before he sets out upon one which, in his judgment, will bring him most speedily and happily to it.

As Mr. Stephen Graham says in his noble prologue to *With the Russian Pilgrims to Jerusalem*, all pilgrimages begin in the heart, and the wishing heart is already on its pilgrimage even though actual attainment be as yet far off. Carpenter, also—agreeably with his principle that Desire precedes Structure—urges constantly (as we have seen) that the kingdom, the rule of the Mass-man, must first be sought, found, and established in the individual heart.

This individual discovery and attainment, which is not easy, although it is comparatively independent of external conditions, will not carry us all the way, however ; if only for the reason that as isolated individuals we do not exist. The race rises in every man, but no man can win to the goal ahead of the race. An individual attainment is a potential race-attainment, and it is under the urge of this potential that we seek to inaugurate and carry out such social policies as shall make actual, in terms of race-life and race-organization, the freedom and equality which



individual experience has shown to be possible. In the individual, the race reaches beyond its grasp.

In a single community, like our own, there are many such social policies afoot; they are not all co-ordinated; indeed, some of them conflict with each other; this conflict is not to be deplored, since it tends to eliminate error and to counteract eccentricity. It would be difficult to identify Carpenter with any particular social movement; his spirit lies behind them all; but it may confidently be said that he would be somewhat out of touch with a movement which seeks to substitute the dominance of one class for another, for "the rule of the Mass-man in the unit man" is by no means the same thing as the rule of the Masses. A good deal of modern socialistic propaganda aims only at using the machinery of the franchise and the brute force of numerical majorities for the purpose of securing to the Masses such political power as shall give them the ascendancy in the State, reverse the present position, and wipe out the old scores against the thus-far-ruling classes. As the inevitable corollary of this aim, there is proceeding—though for the time being it is less apparent in this country than in the continental countries—a tendency to divorce socialism from idealism and religion. The threat, therefore, in these quarters is of a mechanical and materialistic tyranny whose triumph would make the last

state far worse than the first. A socialism of this type is not implied in Carpenter's teaching, which is essentially spiritual, idealistic, religious in the broad sense. It would be well if the springs of socialistic movement could be salted with his salt. His Rule of the Mass-man looks towards a real federation and harmonizing of all interests, the binding together of the whole community in a true union which will not obliterate, but shall transcend and co-ordinate, the manifold differences which are necessary wherever there are "all sorts and conditions of men."

His "Mass-man" is a picturesque expression for that Solidarity which is the characteristic announcement of a developed social consciousness. The conception of Solidarity has been attained often, and in quite early times, though usually restricted to a particular tribe, or city (as in Greece), or nation (as in the case of the Hebrews); within these limits, it was thoroughly applied as a practical social principle. The ancient world produced seers who conceived it as applying beyond tribal and national boundaries to the race as a whole. It came to them as the instruction of an incipient race-consciousness, as being true of Man as such. Thus Epictetus in the *Discourses* :

What art thou? A man. Look at thyself as a solitary creature, and it is according to nature for thee to live to old age, to grow rich, and to keep good health. But if thou look upon thyself as a man, and as a part

of a certain whole, for the sake of that whole it may become thee now to have sickness, now to sail the seas and run into peril, now to suffer need and perchance to die before thy time. Why, then, dost thou bear it hard? Knowest thou not that, as the foot, alone, is not a foot, so thou, alone, art not a man?

In the modern world, by the elimination of distance through scientific inventions, by the linking together of nations with a hundred bonds and channels of interchange, the race-consciousness is much more explicit, the race-unity a much more palpable thing. So a modern Epictetus (Mr. H. G. Wells) announces:

The race flows through us, the race is the drama and we are the incidents. This is not any sort of poetical statement; it is statement of fact. In so far as we are individuals, in so far as we seek to follow individual ends, we are accidental, disconnected, without significance, the sport of chance. In so far as we realize ourselves as experiments of the species for the species, just in so far do we escape from the accidental and the chaotic. We are episodes in an experience greater than ourselves. . . . I see myself in life as part of a great physical being that strains and, I believe, grows towards beauty, and of a great mental being that strains and, I believe, grows towards knowledge and power. In this persuasion that I am a gatherer of experience, a mere tentacle that arranges thought beside thought for this being of the species, this being that grows beautiful—in this persuasion I find the ruling idea of which I stand in need, the ruling idea that reconciles and adjudicates among my warring motives. In it I find both concentration of myself and escape from myself; in a word, I find Salvation.

Carpenter's idea of the Individual is profounder and more mystical than that of Mr. Wells, and does not quite fit with the notion of an "episode" or a "tentacle"; but his Mass-man is the Race as a spiritual Whole present in the individual, the unit-man, and realizing itself in him as a Whole and in a particular way. The conception of Solidarity, then, both communal and racial, is the fundamental social implication of his teaching. It determines his social principles, dominates his social theories, and, so far as he suggests any definite reforms and changes in the social order, is the Ideal to which he is constantly faithful.

The idea may be expressed in the form of a figure. It is as if there were a number of vessels of different sizes, shapes, capacities, kinds, containing water, and connected with each other because their respective orifices open into a common base or reservoir. The water will tend to find a common level in all the vessels, though one may be as narrow as a test-tube and another as capacious as a bell-jar. If for any imaginable reason one of the vessels suffers an impoverishment, the level of the water in the other vessels becomes lower in consequence; if, on the other hand, any vessel receives the gift of an abundant supply, this is communicated on to the rest, who advantage by it, but at the cost of the vessel that is filled.

No man liveth unto himself, and no man dieth

unto himself. If a man withdraws, "corners," hoards to himself, artificially excludes from general availableness, any portion of the life which is his because of his membership in the community, two things happen: the life-level of the whole is reduced, and he himself becomes, in Mr. Wells' words, "disconnected, without significance." "If a grain abideth alone, it dieth." This is plain enough in a time of war, when the food-supplies of a country suddenly become seriously restricted. The selfish hoarder of food-stuffs, the panic-stricken withdrawer of gold from circulation, is recognised as a common enemy. The exceptional circumstance brings the rule to light. The law which, in the special war-condition, is seen operating swiftly and effectively, is always operating, more slowly but none the less surely.

Carpenter illustrates this fact by a discussion of the idea and development of the idea, of private property.<sup>1</sup> There are, he says, two kinds of ownership—legal ownership and true ownership. The former is artificial and "essentially negative"; it is "the power to prevent other people from using"; it is anti-social; it ministers to the selfish and arrogant instincts in a man, and tends to dehumanise him; his wealth becomes "illth." On the other hand, if a man makes for himself a tool, let us say a net for fishing or a hoe for working the land, this is recognised by common consent

<sup>1</sup> *England's Ideal* (sixth edition), p. 139.



(apart from any law) to be his property ; it is, indeed, his own in a deeper sense, seeing that in making it he put himself—his mind, his will, his love,—into it. If, with this tool, he tills a portion of land, cares for it, enters into personal relation with it, and produces a crop therefrom whereby not himself only but his neighbours also may live, thus entering into useful, loving, serving relation with the community, then again by common consent (and apart from law) his ownership of that land is recognised. It is his property ; and it is a trust.

With the increasing complexity of society, however, these simple arrangements no longer hold ; but the law holds. Division of labour arises ; and many individuals combine for the production of one thing. The product of this joint labour cannot naturally belong to one individual ; ideally it belongs to the community, and the individual receives wages which represent—or should represent—the “ average human value which he has put into the product.”

The human value put into an object does not come back to the man in that object, but it comes back to him in counters or checks, that is in money, transmutable into human values in all sorts of objects.<sup>1</sup>

In this stage of society, a man's wages become his private property, but his personal relationship to the product of his labour is weakened. Still, the sense of mankind recognises his true owner-

<sup>1</sup> *England's Ideal*, p. 148.

ship of this money ; and he vindicates that ownership by using it, say, to purchase a tool through which the consciousness of personal relationship with the community in labour is once again restored. Before the Fall, money is the symbol of a Gain, which a man may attain to ; the symbol of a Power, which lies within him.<sup>1</sup>

The Fall comes when money is regarded as an end in itself, and feeds the selfish desire for accumulation and aggrandisement. From this hoarded and exclusive gain all the characteristics of true ownership vanish ; and the false ownership is guaranteed by the law, which gives to a man the legal right to hold as against the rest of the community that which he no longer regards as a trust, to which he has no living and personal relation, and does not use to the common advantage. Such ownership reacts upon the possessor. For just as food nourishes the body in passing through it, just as a flame shines brightly by reason of the current of materials passing through it, so it is with possessions : if a man's gains are gains also for the whole, his membership in the community remains healthy and beautiful ; if they are held selfishly as against the whole, they beget disease and impurity in him ; he becomes a point of irritation, weakness, and corruption in the social body. His own life-level is lowered, and with it the life-level of the whole.

<sup>1</sup> *England's Ideal*, p. 158.

The argument stated here in general terms is applied by Carpenter to the question of land-ownership, which, as every social reformer knows, is the crucial problem, the point on which the roots of every other social problem converge.

Only that people can thrive that loves its land and swears to make it beautiful ;

For the land (the Demos) is the foundation-element of human life, and if the public relation to that is false, all else is of need false and inverted.<sup>1</sup>

Much of the land of this country is held by legal ownership, and is not truly owned by the man whose rights to it could be vindicated by law. The true owner of land is he who works on it, continually thinks how he can do justice to it, spends thought and affection upon it, grieves when he sees it neglected or running to waste. The legal owner is he

who, hardly knowing even the boundaries of that which he possesses, and feeling no warming of the heart towards it to make it beautiful and fruitful, thinks only of what advantage he can gain from it.<sup>2</sup>

To work upon the land is commonly regarded as a burden and a degradation, and those who gain their livelihood by this primal and gracious toil are disowned and despised by such as subsist upon their labour. Into such a condition has the matter now come, that the countryside is being slowly depopulated, depleted of its most vigorous

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 390.

<sup>2</sup> *England's Ideal*, p. 140.

youth ; homesteads stand vacant and forlorn ; it is increasingly difficult to get labour ; ever-widening areas are badly and stingily farmed ; the land begins to pass out of use ; and, on the other side, the centralization of population proceeds with swelling volume and creates that complex of social problems which apparently passes the wit of statesmen to grapple with and solve. These secondary problems cannot be solved until the primary one is settled, any more than the relief of symptoms can cure the disease.

To place a nation squarely on its own base, spreading out its people far and wide in honoured usefulness upon the soil,

Building up all uses and capacities of the land into the life of the masses,

So that the riches of the earth may go first and foremost to those who produce them, and so onward into the whole structure of society ;

To render the life of the people clean and gracious, vital from base to summit, and self-determining,

Dependent simply on itself and not on cliques and coteries of speculators anywhere ; and springing thus inevitably up into wild free forms of love and fellowship ;

To make the wild places of the lands sacred, keeping the streams pure, and planting fresh blooms along their edges ; to preserve the air crystalline and without taint —tempting the sun to shine where before was gloom ;

To adorn the woodlands and the high tops with new trees and shrubs and winged and footed things,

Sparing all living creatures as far as possible rather than destroying them ;

What a pleasure !

But to-day the lands are slimed and fenced over with denials ; and those who would cannot get to them, and those who own have no joy in them.

And so, even to-day, while riches untold are wrung from the earth, it is rather as a robbery that they are produced—without gladness or gratitude, but in grief and sadness and lying and greed and despair and unbelief.

Say, say, what would those riches be, if the Earth and her love were free ?

But all waits.

And Ignorance breeds Fear, and Fear breeds Greed, and Greed that Wealth whose converse is Poverty—and these again breed Strife and Fear in endless circles.<sup>1</sup>

It is not possible to read these lines without emotion ; and although many generations of men must pass between the birth of this feeling in the heart and its realization as structure in society—in “land-nationalization,” or communal ownership of common necessities—yet the future lies with the feeling and not with present organized forms. Carpenter knows his world, both of town and country, both of rich and poor. It is not possible to gainsay him when he speaks of the “crowds of anæmic youths and girls, pale, prematurely sexual, with flabby minds and bodies”<sup>2</sup>—a common sight in the towns ; or of “a thin-legged, slouching, apathetic population”<sup>3</sup>—a common sight in the country ; or of that which exists at the other end of the scale—

A society wielding enormous wealth and privilege,

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 392.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 462.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 463.



skilled chiefly in the finesse of personal gain and advancement, and honeycombed by cynicism and unbelief.<sup>1</sup>

Though there are sweeter, healthier, nobler elements in society than these, the picture is true enough to give force and sting to his question,

How out of such stuff can a strong nation grow ?

Where are the conditions for the growth of men and women,

Healthy and well-formed of limb, self-reliant, enterprising, alert, skilled in the use of tools, able to cope with Nature in her moods, and with the Earth for their sustenance, loving and trustful of each other, united and invincible in silent faith ?<sup>2</sup>

There are eager and faithful groups within the community who spend energy of brain and heart to create the conditions for the outcrop of a decent population ; they wrestle with the hydra-headed problem of destitution, poverty, sanitation, housing, disease ; they find not only that it is exceedingly difficult to make headway, but also that complete success is impossible, because " the Earth and her love are not free." If the hypothesis of solidarity is valid, then the lowness of the life-level—as manifest in the misery and straits of the poor as in the idleness and luxury of the rich—is due to the fact that the foundation-element of life is being withdrawn and excluded from common use and serviceableness. To get

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 463.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 464.

that life back again into open and free channels is the central problem of modern social effort. It is being done. One of Carpenter's practical proposals, namely,

by cumulative or prohibitive taxation transfer at once a large quantity of idle and dead wealth into the occupancy of the people for living and public uses,<sup>1</sup>

finds, at least partially, its place in present-day legislation. Another,

ownership in land might at once be limited to occupying ownership,<sup>2</sup>

is more Utopian, but the tendency moves slowly in that direction. The way may be long; but these structural changes which to-day are carried out in the teeth of much opposition will proceed more healthily according as the spirit of understanding and love acts with increasing effectiveness as a solvent of the spirit of selfishness. Signs are not wanting that this also is taking place. There is ground for optimism; and it is characteristic of Carpenter that amid all the tangle he never lets go this thread of faith. The period of disunion, division, strife, through which we are now passing is itself a moment in the development of man, and probably necessary to that development.

I take it that it is necessary that the individual should be excluded from the tribe (as the child is excluded from

<sup>1</sup> *England's Ideal*, p. 163.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 163.

its mother's womb) that he may learn the lessons of individuality ; that he may learn his powers, and the mastery over things ; that he may learn his right relations to others, and the misery of mere self-seeking and greed ; and that, having learned these lessons, and so to speak found the limits of Self, he may once more fuse that Self—not now again with the tribe, but with something greater and grander, namely Humanity.<sup>1</sup>

The serene light of that faith is the best light in which to put forth social effort, and share in the creation of the future. Experience must have its perfect work, and finds its efficient instrument in the man who accepts it, and transmutes it in his own heart into social love and power. Such a man becomes the centre round which the new system forms ; and to him is given the vision of that which shall be, since in him abides that which eternally is.

Experience (which in time to all must come) breeds Sympathy, and Sympathy Understanding, and Understanding Love ;

And Love leads Helpfulness by the hand, to open the gates of Power unlimited—even for that new race which now appears.<sup>2</sup>

History may repeat itself, and this which we speak of as our civilization, with all its inheritance from the past, may, like earlier civilizations, as it reaches to its term suffer the devastating shock of the divine decree, " The end is forbidden " ; when the structures which we have reared in toil and agony, fashioning them as near to the Ideal

<sup>1</sup> *England's Ideal*, p. 156.

<sup>2</sup> *T. D.*, p. 393.

as may be, shall approach completion, the invisible heralds of a new epoch may be thundering at the gates ; and since they cannot dwell in our tents or palaces, or find room for their larger life within our order, the fabric we have loved into life may, in answer to their challenge, shake and fall. But as the " higher men " build the still ampler temple, the still more regal palace, using not without gratitude such of our materials as may be worthy, they will read upon the fallen stones thereof the joyous witness that " we too have known."

## CHAPTER XIV

### A PERSONAL APPRECIATION

" This is what you shall do : Love the earth and sun and the animals, despise riches, give alms to every one that asks, stand up for the stupid and crazy, devote your income and labour to others, hate tyrants, argue not concerning God, have patience and indulgence towards the people, take off your hat to nothing known or unknown, or to any man or number of men—go freely with powerful uneducated persons and with the young, and with the mothers of families, re-examine all that you have been told in school or church or in any book, and dismiss whatever insults your own soul ; and your very flesh shall be a great poem, and have the richest fluency, not only in its words, but in the silent lines of its lips and face, and between the lashes of your eyes, and in every motion and joint of your body."—WALT WHITMAN.

IT is not so strange as might at first sight appear that a book which is offered as an exposition of a man's teaching should close with an appreciation of the man himself. I do this, not simply to satisfy my own personal feelings, but also because, to a degree beyond what would be strictly true of most authors, the personality and the teaching are one. To write a book which should create a personal relation between himself and the reader was Carpenter's



first desire. It would be difficult to name a volume which achieves this more successfully than *Towards Democracy*. Who touches this, touches a friend.

From the academic point of view, his writing is open to criticism in respect both of literature and philosophy. I think that he is very largely indifferent to this. He does not desire to be a professional litterateur or philosopher, and would deem it more a commendation than a criticism to be called an amateur, remembering that the word means a lover. He is a lover first and last—a lover of life, of Nature, of humankind. *Towards Democracy*—and all his other writings lie within the scope of this—is a book which seeks less to establish a point of view than to find personal contacts. Many authors have a host of unknown admirers; Carpenter is among the few whose works have made for them a host of unknown friends. In *Towards Democracy* a man gives himself away with all the wholeness and abandon of a lover to whomsoever cares to, or can, receive him. It is dominated and saturated with a distinct and definite personal experience; it is creation, because it is incarnation; it is a frank self-disclosure. Such intimate self-revealings have given great books to the literature of the world; if a man has some gift in the art of writing, and will use it to tell a vivid inward experience with simplicity and without reservation, he can scarcely fail of a literary

achievement or of a peculiarly powerful and fascinating piece of work. This will be true if, as in the case of De Quincey, the experience is one somewhat remote from the life of a normal man; it will be much more conspicuously true if, as in the case of St. Augustine, the experience is typical and finds its counterpart in the lives of multitudes of men and women.

*Towards Democracy* is in the way of a Confession, but it has none of the morbidity and unnaturalness of De Quincey's, and none of the painfully self-conscious introspection and self-torturing of St. Augustine; it is essentially healthy and joyous; it can scarcely be called introspective at all, for Carpenter is not looking in upon his soul, as St. Augustine was, but rather out from his soul. Most of all, *Towards Democracy* deals with an experience which, *ex hypothesi*, is potential in each individual and in the race as a whole—not merely potential, but centrally potential; an experience, moreover, which in these days seems to stand near to the threshold for many individuals and many communities. The outstanding peculiarity of the book is an extraordinary blend, as it were, of universal and particular. One feels that the "I" is a man, and at the same time the deepest in every man. There is the almost constant sense of the overshadowing of a mighty majestic Presence, and yet in the luminous cloud one always sees the "Face like my face," the "Hand like this hand," the

“Man like to me.” St. Augustine is human, but conveys the almost harrowing feeling of ineluctable human weakness; Carpenter is intensely human, but never fails to convey the inspiring feeling of inalienable human strength and glory. “Be still, O Soul, and know that thou art God.” He gives one the sense of a great life, which is the natural medium of the soul’s existence, but from which one is shut out, not from any fault of one’s own, but under the operation of a cosmic creative purpose; the imprisonment is not punitive, but educative; and it is real enough and stubborn enough to guarantee that when the prisoner escapes he shall be worthy and able to live the life that waits beyond the walls. Not a few people grope and fumble round the barriers of their prison in hope of finding an outlet somewhere; some are even at the door, yet cannot raise the latch or turn the key; only to the favoured ones, as to Paul and Silas, do the doors fly open of themselves; Carpenter says, “Lo! I open a door.” That is why we love him.

In some such case *Towards Democracy* found me. I should be taking an unpardonable advantage of my readers if I intruded my personal experience upon them; it will suffice to say that towards the climax of an inward personal crisis which had been gathering for some years, the voice came to me also, “Tolle, lege,” and the scripture that was in my hand was *Towards Democracy*.

Deep, deep is thy heart. As I sink in it, lo! there is nothing, nothing which is not held by thy love.

On the surface there is rejection and discrimination, but in the depth lo! everything is held by it.<sup>1</sup>

Words which in an ordinary way appear almost colourless and commonplace receive, when sounded in the exceptional hour, a magical beauty and potency; and to me these words were like a divine call issuing from the great Life of equality, freedom, love. With the suddenness of a miracle I was out through the open door; my Self was harmonised; my problems were not solved, they were transcended; if ever I should engage with them again, it would be from a point above them. I was standing on a hill-top taking deep breaths of sun and wind and space. Never, since childhood, had I been so inwardly peaceful, balanced, strong, happy. I was out in the open at last.

Shortly afterwards, I met Carpenter for the first time. I will venture to transcribe a page from my note-book in which, a day or two later, I set down my first impressions of the man.

I was about to take a short solitary walking-tour, and Carpenter had asked me to make Millthorpe, the little Derbyshire hamlet in which he has lived for thirty years and still resides, my jumping-off place. He had promised to come out along the road to meet me. It was a quiet evening after a hot July day when I left the train

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 375.



at Chesterfield, and, knapsack on back, I was soon away from the houses and out on the broad white highway with its flowering scented hedges-rows. After five miles, at a sudden turning of the road, I saw him in the distance ; unless I had known the date of his birth, I could not have believed that he had passed the sixtieth milestone a long way back, for here was by every outward sign a young man, erect, lithe, athletic in appearance, sandalled, with free stride and high step ; he wore a soft hat tilted a little to one side in the half-rakish fashion of Walt Whitman ; he came swinging a stick in his hand, and had something of the carriage of a care-free boy about him. When he caught sight of me, he waved his hat in the air. After an interchange of greetings, we turned homeward talking of simple things—of birds and trees, of clouds and sunsets, of harvest and village-life. As we drew near to the village we overtook two children, joined hands with them, and chatted of school and play. They tugged at his hands, and nestled their cheeks against his forearms. I wished that I had been small, and could have done the same. At length we arrived at the long, low, two-storied, stone cottage, with its door opening straight into the living-room, where his companion—the delectable George—had prepared for us a delicious simple meal of omelette and fruit and wine.

Through the open doorway, as we sat at the table, I could look out down a long grass pathway,



bordered with a careless profusion of gay flowers, and running away to the boundary of a large orchard. For, during the years that followed the publication of *Towards Democracy*, Carpenter earned his living in this place by market-gardening and fruit-growing. Along the far hedge of the orchard ran a little stream, dammed up under the tree-shadows to make an open-air bathing-place; and beyond it rose the gentle slopes of a sparsely-wooded hill, with a few browsing cattle and a whole township of rabbits. Upon this scene of quiet sylvan beauty we gazed as we sat in the shelter of a yew-hedge, chatting the hours away, until the moon rose, low and large, over the hill-top. He impressed me most with a sense of spaciousness and rest; his mind had something of the largeness and the luminousness of the evening sky, and his voice something of the gentleness, the serenity, of the bird-notes as Nature gathered her brood under her night wings. Even when we argued—and argue we did—he seemed to radiate peace, and I remembered how it had been written,

He touched her hand, and the fever left her.

Later on, we went together to the village inn, where he was welcomed almost as a village-father. We gathered there the news brought from home and field and market; inquired about the sick wife, or the new-born child, or the youth who had gone to work in the city; and when “mine

host" passed the word for "lights out," we lingered, a happy laughing group, on the moonlit road. Then one after another said Good-night and disappeared into the shadows; and, last of all, we two passed through the wicket-gate of the garden into the deeper heart of the universal quiet.

A few moments later, as I sat in the simply-furnished bedroom, by the open window, looking out across the scented garden and the silvered hills, I found myself saying, "For the first time in all my life, I think I know what Freedom means, and Equality, and Religion, and God."

Years have passed since, but I have nothing to take back from that first impression. I do not think that it is possible to understand and appreciate Carpenter's teaching without placing it in some such personal setting as this. He embodies his own philosophy, precisely because that philosophy is the partial formulation of an experience which has made him what he is. The things that have been discussed in these pages may be seen and realized in terms of the glance of an eye, the pressure of a hand, the poise of his body, the sound of his voice. The life has been lived. The secret of much of the power of Carpenter's writing lies here.

There is a great deal of fine poetry in our tongue which is "of imagination all compact," and powers of language are strained to their limits to express the glory of the vision, the

unearthly radiance of the things seen by the rapt and soaring spirit; Carpenter cannot be said to lack imagination of true poetic quality, and ecstasy might fittingly be used as a descriptive word for the experience in which the poet within him was born; yet not only is his vocabulary of the simplest, his imagery of the most homely, but even in his heavenly places there is always the earth-scent, an earth-radiation. Even when his head is aureoled by the flame-tinted clouds, and the clarion of a "prophet sent from God" is to his lips, his feet are on the earth, as if he were grasping it with "spreading toes." He is earthy, in the great sense. His writing smells of the soil. He refuses to "lose touch with the actual." He is optimist, not in spite of, but because of, the facts. He is a true son of Man. He rises out of the ground. A clean, healthy odour is about him. He has assisted at the birth of lambs, has suckled calves, has toiled as a wage-labourer in the fields, has made sandals, trenched his acres, pruned his trees, sold his produce in the market, learned the use of materials—not as the experiment of a faddist or the hobby of some health-culturist, but as his chosen way of life and living.

This fact lies behind all his writing, even in its highest flights. He never loses the simplicity and the dignity of common earth and common Man. "This world is Paradise," he says. He crams heaven with earth. He has no need of

seraphs, angels, gods, fairies, and other creatures of the imagination, which so often fill the highly-coloured magnificent canvases of artists in speech or line. Nothing could be found on Olympus that would serve his purpose better than the soot-lined face and the oil-smeared hands of a young engine-driver. A woman nursing her baby, unashamed and at her ease on the doorstep of her cottage, is Madonna good enough for him, real enough, and superb enough. He uses his imagination, not to create another world and another race, but to reveal the truth of this familiar world and its usual natural folk. The Ideal is here, not in some beatific vision only to be glimpsed somewhere towards, or beyond, the bourne of mortality. It looks out upon us from every side. All this is as much in the practice of his life as it is in the message of his books. He peers with quiet gentle eyes into your face and sees a god. The only people he cannot away with are boors, posers, puppets, lacqueys, and such as conceal and deny their natural manhood and womanhood under the myriad masks and cloaks of an artificial conventional respectability. These are the damned. The unforgiveable sin is unreality and infidelity to self.

He himself is transparent and guileless. He is like a child for directness and purity of heart. One might question at times the soundness of his judgments, but could not suspect him under any circumstances of duplicity or of mixed motives.



He is forthright. In one of his books he tells the story of a Manitoban miner who was discovered, one desperate winter's night, lying on the ice-covered Lake Superior which he had attempted to traverse. He lay there frozen, insensible, stiff as a log. His rescuers

picked him up and carried him back to the cabin, and sat up all night and into the next day continually rubbing and chafing his body. At last he came to and made a complete recovery, and in a few days—except for some marks of frostbite on his skin—showed no sign of damage. Surely that was a holy man, in whom the frost, though it went right through his body, could find no sin.<sup>1</sup>

In some similar sense to that Carpenter is a holy man, a natural saint. He has all the inward immovableness and courage of his type, arrayed in a rare and lovable gentleness. I do not think that I am mistaken in saying that he himself is one of the children of Uranus, and that there is a considerable element of autobiography in the poem from which I quoted on an earlier page. Masculinity and femininity are at equipoise in him. His might be said to be a man-woman consciousness. No man surpasses him in intimate and sympathetic understanding of the woman-soul. He gives me the impression of a delicately-balanced organism in a state of perfect equilibrium. My study of his teaching has failed if it has not displayed him possessed of the intuition

<sup>1</sup> *A. C.*, p. 256.



of a woman and the logical faculty of a man. He has the broad intellectual sweep of the masculine mind, and yet is a woman in his sense of the significance of details. He has the man's profound appreciation of order, and that barbaric elemental soul-quality which is characteristically the woman's. He has a man's sense of truth, and a woman's capacity for whole-hearted self-giving. He has a man's venturesomeness, yet like a woman he begins to make a home wherever he finds himself. To him also has fallen the lot of the Urning to be misunderstood, and his heart has known the tragedy of a brooding love apparently rendered ineffectual because of the aloofness and unbelief of the world. "They will not come unto me that they may have life."

Such a man is saved from despair by two things—by a sense of humour, and by the cultivation of a habit of detachment whereby he is able to do things with a minimum of concern either as to their being done or as to their reception when done. Carpenter has the sense of humour in a high degree; he can laugh at the world and at himself, yet there is as little of the cynic in the one case as there is of the trifler in the other. The basis of his humour is sympathy and understanding; he smiles at the fussy eagerness and the tragic anxiety and the multitudinous tricks of men, not as a superior person, nor as a railer, nor as one who underrates the accomplishments or mistakes the strivings of the world, but

rather as one who sees quite clearly that all the time men are gaining other than they think, building other than they know, and being led quite safely and satisfactorily otherwhither than they imagine. He laughs at human foibles and follies, not with any desire to laugh people out of them, but seeing that these things which count so much matter little, and that all is well.

He is the candid friend and the gentle critic who cannot forget that he is the lover too. The world is a comedy of manners in which all the complications lead on to the happy ending which is pre-ordained. Life is a great game, and therefore he who would play it well must take it seriously, but not too seriously; the heart of the amateur must be held sacred even at the cost of some of the skill of the professional.

In equal measure Carpenter has the casualness of the wayside sower of seed. Because he believes in himself, it does not seem to him to matter much where he casts himself; because he believes in the inherent vitality of his message, it does not matter on what soil it may be flung; he would commit it to the waves of the sea, or to the ripples of the little brook, just as soon as he would institutionalize it in the high places, or get it conserved as a "sacred deposit" by some creditable organization. To announce himself is the great thing, and it matters little into whose ear; he would as soon the washerwoman at her tub as the doctors of the university for an audi-

ence. He has high precedent for this, if he needed it. He is human enough to be glad of recognition should it come ; but he does not seek it, would not serve half a day's labour for its wages. He knows how to wait. He is essentially masterful. He gets his share of criticism, and he accepts it with sincere humility and gratitude, as who would not be grateful for the " sting in the wine, the salt at the feast " ?

At rest, the pose of his body is that of great ease and content ; in movement—and this is as true of his mind—it is the embodiment of virile hope. He goes as one who walks eastward towards a sunrise which is as sure as it will be glorious. His face is illumined with the light that already rises beyond the horizon.

In the Friezes which adorn the Boston Library, Sargent has painted a succession of figures representing the prophets of the Old Testament. The earlier ones are shrouded heavily in gloom, and are posed in attitudes of distress ; they seem to be pregnant with groanings that cannot be uttered. They are in an agony of travail. But gradually the faces lift, and turn, until they are lit up with a light which comes from a source which is outside of the picture, some " far-off divine event " which presages its own arrival. Towards the end of the series—I think that it is the very last one—is Zephaniah, whose spiritual countenance is irradiated with the sure expectation. His ringing words come to mind :

The Lord thy God is in the midst of thee, a mighty one who will save ; he will rejoice over thee with joy, he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing. Behold, at that time I will deal with them that afflict thee ; and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven away ; and I will make them a praise and a name, whose shame hath been in all the earth.

It is, so far as I am aware, a pure coincidence, but Carpenter might have sat for that figure of Zephaniah ; it is almost a portrait of him, both in face and figure. That is his position among the prophets of the modern world. He could not have been thinking of himself when he wrote the lines, but out of knowledge and love I will venture to write them as postscript of this book :

It is not a little thing that by such a life your face should become as a lantern of strength to men ;

That wherever you go they should rise up stronger to the battle, and go forth with good courage.

Nay, it is very great.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *T. D.*, p. 143.





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